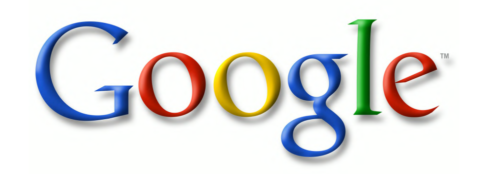
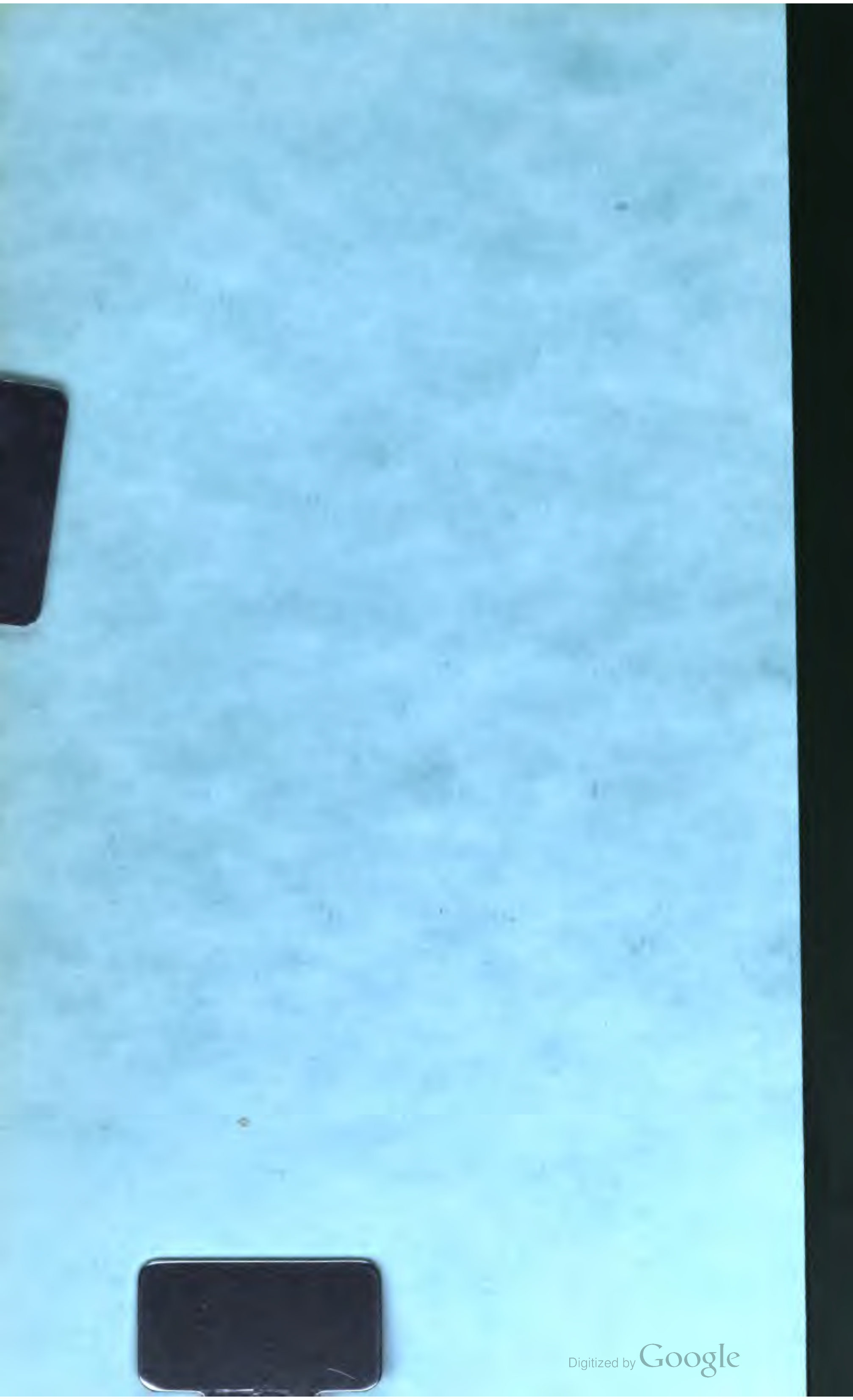


Compania del gran ferrocarril del sud de Buenos Aires, 1899.



FERROCARRIL DEL SUD

INAUGURACIÓN OFICIAL

DE LA

Prolongación de



Bahía Blanca al Neuquén



BUENOS AIRES
IMPRENTA Y TALLER DE FOTOGRABADOS DE FAUSTO ORTEGA
Calle Perú número 662-672

1899

FERROCARRIL DEL SUD—ESTACIÓN PLAZA CONSTITUCIÓN

COMPAÑIA

DEL

GRAN FERROCARRIL DEL SUD DE BUENOS AIRES

DIRECTORES:

FRANK PARISH, PRESIDENTE
EDWARD ASHWORTH
GEORGE W. DRABBLE
JOHN FAIR
R. J. NEILD
DAVID A. SHENNAN

SECRETARIO:

H. C. ALLEN

INGENIEROS CONSULTORES:

LIVESEY, SON & HENDERSON

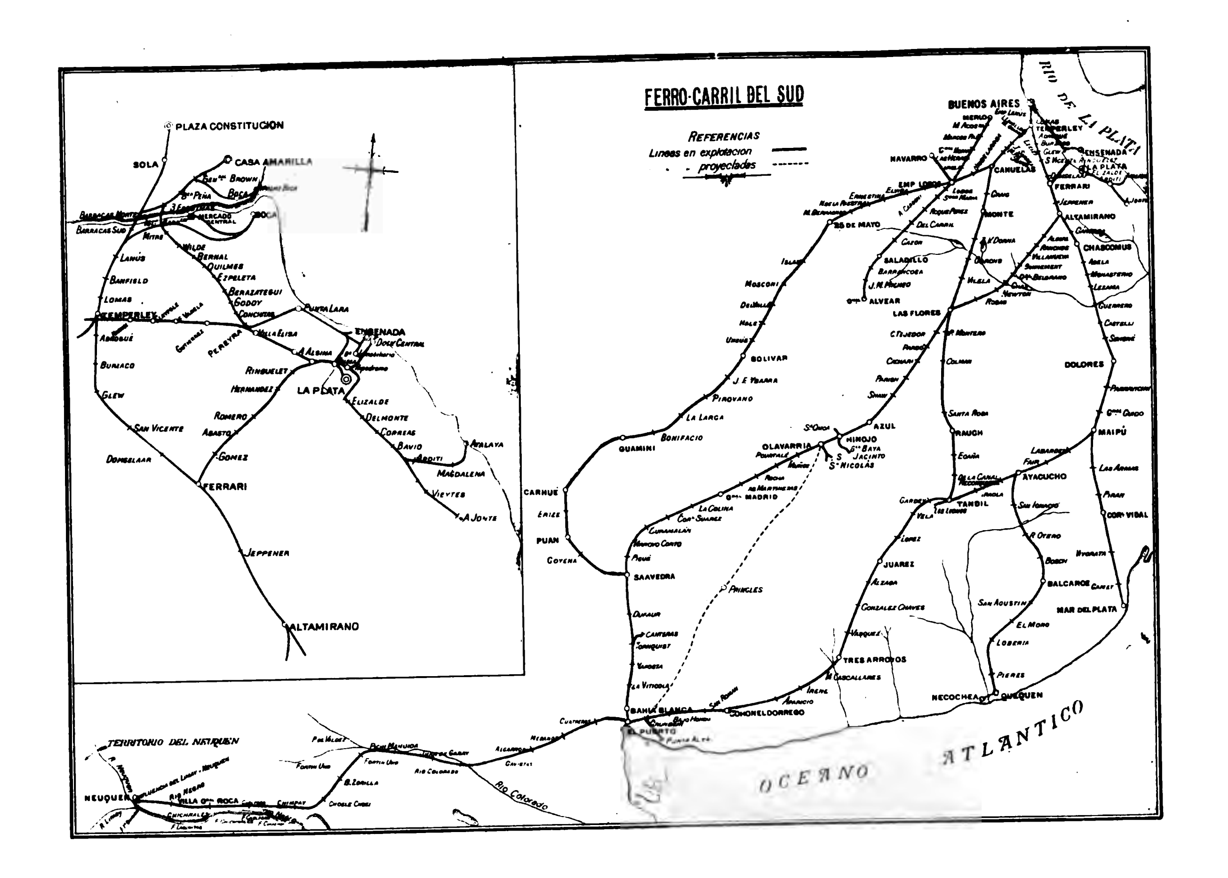
COMISIÓN LOCAL, BUENOS AIRES:

GUILLERMO WHITE, PRESIDENTE
GEORGE T. CRANE
CHARLES H. KRABBÉ

GERENTE:

FRANK HENDERSON

Cottrell
8-19-32



Fecha de apertura de las distintas prolongaciones del Ferrocarril del Sud y Capital de la Empresa en las mismas

KILOMETRAGE

Sección	*Capital*	*Fecha de apertura*	*Millas*
Buenos Aires á Jeppener	£ 750.000	Agosto 14 1865	48
Jeppener á Altamirano	£ 750.000	Diciembre 14 1865	6½
Altamirano á Chascomús	£ 750.500	Diciembre 14 1865	16
Chascomús á Dolores	£ 1.826.900	Noviembre 10 1874	56
Dolores á Maipú	£ 2.770.135	Diciembre 7 1880	42½
Maipú á Ayacucho	£ 2.770.135	Diciembre 7 1880	38½
Ayacucho á Tandil	£ 4.524.296	Agosto 19 1883	39
Tandil á Juárez	£ 6.350.000	Mayo 8 1885	53
Juárez á Tres Arroyos	£ 7.000.000	Abril 2 1886	55½
Tres Arroyos á Bahía Blanca	£ 15.532,930	Diciembre 2 1891	119
Altamirano á Ranchos	£ 1.197.350	Marzo 1 1871	15
Ranchos á General Belgrano	£ 1.197.350	Mayo 19 1871	20
General Belgrano á Las Flores	£ 1.284.600	Julio 1 1872	40
Las Flores á Azul	£ 2.402.389	Septiembre 8 1876	68
Azul á Olavarría	£ 4.524.296	Marzo 15 1883	27
Olavarría á General La Madrid	£ 4.524.296	Octubre 1 1883	58
Gral. La Madrid á Bahía Blanca	£ 5.124.296	Mayo 7 1884	162
Maipú á Mar del Plata	£ 7.000.000	Septiembre 26 1886	80
Hinojo á Sierras Bayas	£ 8.000.000	Julio 16 1887	3½
Hinojo á Sierra Chica	£ 8.000.000	Julio 16 1887	6¼
Hinojo á Sierra Chica, prolong.	£ 19.282.930	Julio 23 1898	4
Ramal á Boca	£ 8.500.000	Julio 23 1888	4
Ramal al Mercado C. de Frutos	£ 17.032.930	Febrero 2 1896	1½
Tandil á Los Leones	£ 15.532.930	Mayo 1892	4
Olavarría á San Jacinto	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 21 1893	7¾
Olavarría á San Nicolás	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 21 1893	2¾
Olavarría á Loma Negra	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 21 1893	4¼
Merlo á Lobos	£ 11.000.000	Julio 21 1890	39¾
Lobos á Saladillo	£ 11.000.000	Julio 21 1890	54¼
Saladillo á Alvear	£ 17.032.930	Noviembre 1 1897	30
Temperley á Cañuelas	£ 11.000.000	Marzo 12 1890	29
Cañuelas á Las Flores	£ 15.532.930	Mayo 1 1892	71
Las Flores á Tandil	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 1 1891	94
Ayacucho á Balcarce	£ 15.532.930	Febrero 24 1892	54½
Balcarce á Quequen	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 1 1892	65
Quequen á Necochea	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 1 1892	1
Cañuelas á Lobos	£ 15.532.930	Agosto 1 1892	20¾
Lobos á Navarro	£ 19.282.930	Enero 1 1898	14¾
Lobos á 25 de Mayo	£ 19.282.930	Enero 10 1898	67
25 de Mayo á S. Carlos de Bolívar	£ 19.282.930	Julio 27 1898	77
San Carlos de Bolívar á Guaminí	£ 19.282.930	Julio 27 1898	96
Guaminí á Saavedra	£ 19.282.930	Julio 27 1898	83
El Puerto á Río Colorado	£ 17.032.930	Octubre 1 1897	106¼
Río Colorado á Choele Choel	£ 19.282.930	Julio 1 1898	110¾
Choele Choel á Neuquen	£ 21.012.230	Junio 1 1899	133
Grünbein á Puerto Belgrano	£ 19.282.930	Julio 1 1898	13
Sección Ensenada	£ 19.282.930	Julio 1 1898	74
		Total	2,212

INAUGURACIÓN AL NEUQEN — TREN NÚM. 1

Compañía del Gran Ferrocarril del Sud de Buenos Aires

ANTECEDENTES

A mediados del año 1895, S. E. el señor Ministro del Interior, doctor don Benjamín Zorrilla, manifestó al Presidente de la Comisión Local de la Compañía del Gran Ferrocarril del Sud, que el Gobierno tenía el propósito de procurar la construcción de una vía férrea al Neuquen, y que creía que la Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud era la indicada para llevarla á cabo.

El Presidente de la Comisión Local contestó al señor Ministro que hacía algún tiempo que se había efectuado un reconocimiento del trayecto, y que el informe obtenido por la Compañía no era satisfactorio, de manera que para efectuar la construcción sería indispensable el apoyo eficaz del Estado, puesto que los campos en general eran pobres de aguadas y pastos y la población reducida y esparcida en una gran extensión.

El señor Ministro del Interior insistió en su idea, ofreciendo en compensación una donación de tierras como prima, la que no fuè aceptada, por cuanto el trayecto que atraviesa la vía proyectada era todo de propiedad particular y su expropiación no era práctica; así que, después de estudiado detenidamente el asunto y con el fin de ayudar al P. E. en el propósito que manifestaba por medio de S. E. el señor Ministro del Interior, se formalizó el siguiente contrato:

« Entre Su Excelencia el Señor Ministro en el Departamento de « Relaciones Exteriores, encargado del despacho del Ministerio del « Interior en representación del Excelentísimo Gobierno Nacional « por una parte, y Don Guillermo White, apoderado de la Empresa « del Gran Ferrocarril del Sud por la otra, se ha convenido en la « celebración del contrato, cuyos artículos son del tenor siguiente:

« Art. 1.° — La Empresa del Gran Ferrocarril del Sud se obliga á « construir una vía férrea y telégrafo que arranquen de Bahía Blanca « y lleguen hasta el occidente de la confluencia del Limay con el « Neuquen, siguiendo el trazado que resulte más conveniente de los « estudios que debe practicar.

« Art. 2.° — Dichos estudios, con los planos correspondientes, « serán sometidos á la aprobación del Poder Ejecutivo, dentro de « seis meses después de perfeccionado este contrato.

« Art. 3.° — La Nación adquirirá por su cuenta y escriturará « gratuitamente á la Empresa, los terrenos necesarios para la vía, « Estaciones y casas de Camineros, en las proporciones siguientes:

a) « Treinta y cinco metros de ancho para la vía en toda su « longitud, cuyos treinta y cinco metros, podrá reducir hasta « quince metros dentro del egido del pueblo de Bahía Blanca, y « deberá ensanchar hasta setenta y cinco metros, donde fuese « necesario para la altura de los terraplenes ó profundidad de « los desmontes:

b) « Veinte hectáreas para cada Estación principal, esceptuándose « en la Ciudad de Bahía Blanca, donde la Empresa posee el « terreno necesario, catorce para cada Estación intermedia y « catorce hectáreas para cada casa de Camineros.

« Art. 4.° — La vía tendrá la misma trocha y será construida con « materiales de la misma calidad que la red de la Empresa, pudién-

« dose emplear rieles de acero de veinte y cinco kilógramos por « metro y debiendo dotarla de las locomotoras adecuadas.

« Art. 5.° — El Ferrocarril y el telégrafo, serán terminados « dentro de los dos años siguientes á la aprobación de los estudios, « salvo caso fortuito ó de fuerza mayor.

« Art. 6.° — El Gobierno Nacional se compromete á obtener del de « la Provincia de Buenos Aires, las prórrogas necesarias para la eje- « cución de las prolongaciones y ramales pendientes, segun contrato « de fecha 25 de Junio de 1895, celebrado entre la Empresa y la « Provincia de Buenos Aires, y en caso de no obtenerlas sufragará « las penas pecuniarias que se impongan á la Empresa.

« Art. 7.° — La línea á construirse en virtud de este contrato, sus « prolongaciones y ramales, quedarán durante quince años eximidas « de la observancia de las disposiciones legales que fijan el tiempo « acordado para los transportes. Este punto será, durante el tiempo « indicado, materia de la reglamentación que el Poder Ejecutivo « establezca de acuerdo con la Empresa.

« Art. 8.° — Se declaran eximidos de derechos de introducción é « impuestos de cualquier clase, los materiales que se introduzcan « durante CINCUENTA AÑOS para la construcción y explotación « del Ferrocarril y del telégrafo, de sus prolongaciones y ramales, « y de toda la red de propiedad de la Compañía.

« Art. 9.° — Todos los años el Poder Ejecutivo, de acuerdo con la « Empresa, fijará el monto y clase de los materiales y artículos que « deberán entrar libres de derechos, de conformidad á lo dispuesto « en el artículo anterior.

« Art. 10. — Las propiedades, muebles é inmuebles que constitu- « yan los Ferrocarriles y telégrafos de la Empresa y sean destinados « para su explotación y tráfico, no pagarán impuestos Nacionales, « Provinciales ni Municipales durante el mismo término de cin- « cuenta años.

« Art. 11. — Se acuerda á la Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud, « autorización para la construcción de muelles, pescantes, depósitos « y demás instalaciones que fuesen necesarias en el Puerto de Bahía « Blanca para la carga, descarga y acomodo de todo lo que constituye « el tráfico del Ferrocarril, pudiendo al efecto servirle de base su « actual instalación, que queda definitivamente incorporada á este « contrato con las modificaciones ó ampliaciones que requiera, ó cons- « truir nuevas instalaciones, según convenga á las necesidades del « tráfico de todas sus líneas, prévia aprobación de planos por el Po-

« der Ejecutivo, no pudiendo cobrar tarifas más altas que las análo-
« gas que rijan en el Puerto de la Capital.

« Art. 12. — La Empresa aplicará á la vía férrea y telégrafo de « Bahía Blanca, las tarifas básicas á oro sellado que ahora rijen en « las líneas de su propiedad, y podrá mantenerlas para todas, indis- « tintamente, mientras que el producto líquido no exceda del 10 % al « año sobre su capital en acciones y obligaciones.

« Art. 13. — A los efectos del artículo precedente, los gastos que- « dan fijados en el 50 % de las entradas y llegado el caso, la reduc- « ción de las tarifas será proporcional con el exceso del líquido « producto.

« Art. 14. — La Nación acuerda á la Empresa una prima de « 756.000 $ m/n oro sellado, pagadera en diez anualidades de 75,600 « pesos oro sellado cada una, debiendo efectuarse el pago conjunto « de dos anualidades el día en que se dé al servicio público la línea « en toda su extensión y las subsiguientes á fin de cada año.

« Art. 15. — La Empresa tendrá derecho para prolongar la línea « y construir ramales en cualquier dirección, prévia aceptación de los « planos por el Poder Ejecutivo, bajo las condiciones estipuladas en « este contrato, debiendo dar cuenta, para su aprobación, al Hono- « rable Congreso, pero sin obligación de parte del Estado de donarle « los terrenos necesarios para vía, Estaciones y casas de Camineros.

« Art. 16. —La Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud tendrá derecho « á tomar el agua que necesite para las Estaciones, casas de Cami- « neros y para el servicio de la explotación del Ferrocarril, de los « ríos que se encuentren á inmediaciones del trayecto, así como con- « ducirla por medio de canales, acequias ó cañerías desde el punto de « toma hasta el Ferrocarril, de acuerdo con los planos que al efecto « apruebe el Poder Ejecutivo, declarándose de utilidad pública el « derecho á la servidumbre de paso de estas por las propiedades que « deba cruzarse, siendo por cuenta del Gobierno las indemnizaciones « que se impongan por esta servidumbre.

« Art. 17. —En el caso de que la Empresa no diera cumplimiento « á lo dispuesto en el artículo 5.º de este Contrato, pagará la suma « de 5,000 pesos oro por cada mes de retardo en la terminación de « las obras.

« Art. 18. — Se declara de utilidad pública la expropiación de los « terrenos que se destinen para la vía, prolongaciones, ramales, « Estaciones y casas de Camineros á que se refiere este contrato.

« Art. 19.— Cualquier diferencia que surgiera respecto de la vali-

« dez, inteligencia ó ejecución de este contrato, será sometido á la « decisión de árbitros nombrados en forma legal».

« Art. 20.—El plazo estipulado para la presentación de los estu- « dios y planos mencionados en el artículo 2.º, comenzará á correr « desde la fecha de este contrato».

« Para los fines consiguientes firmamos este en Buenos Aires, « Capital de la República Argentina, á 16 de Marzo de 1896 ». — A. ALCORTA. — GUILLERMO WHITE

Este contrato fué aprobado por el Honorable Congreso por Ley número 3.344 y se procedió enseguida á su estricto cumplimiento mejorando en su mayor parte la construcción especialmente en los materiales de vía, obras de arte y trazado, de manera que la vía del Ferrocarril al Neuquen, por la formación de su vía permanente, peso de sus rieles y pendientes, es la mejor vía que existe hoy en la República.

La Compañía del Gran Ferrocarril del Sud con el propósito de procurar llevar al conocimiento del mayor número de personas el esfuerzo que se ha hecho al construir la vía al Neuquen, propuso á S. E. el señor Presidente de la República, Teniente General don Julio A. Roca, conmemorar la apertura de la línea con una inauguración oficial que permitiera conducir á S. E. el señor Presidente de la República, Ministros y miembros del Honorable Congreso, altos funcionarios públicos y personas distinguidas de todos los gremios, en el número que fuera conciliable con los elementos de que se dispusiera y la distancia á recorrer.

Este pensamiento fué favorablemente recibido por el Excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República y se procedió enseguida á hacerlo práctico preparándose los elementos necesarios é invitando á las personas que formaran la comitiva de los tres trenes que se organizarían para conducir las personas invitadas, de las cuales unas doscientas cincuenta

honraron á la Empresa con su asistencia y fueron distribuídas en los trenes en la forma siguiente: Estando representada la Compañía en el 1er. tren por los señores White, Presidente de la Comisión Local; Allen, Secretario del Directorio de Londres y Henderson, Gerente; en el 2.° por los Gefes de las diferentes reparticiones de la Empresa; y en el 3.° por los miembros de la Comisión Local.



INAUGURACIÓN AL NEUQUEN — TREN NÚM. 2

FERRRO CARRIL AL NEUQUEN

INAUGURACIÓN OFICIAL

1.° DE JUNIO DE 1899.

Tren número 1

Tte. Gral. D. Julio A. Roca, Presidente de la República.
Gral. D. Luís María Campos, Ministro de la Guerra.
Comodoro D. Martín Rivadavia, Ministro de Marina.
Dr. D. Emilio Frers, Ministro de Agricultura.
Dr. D. Emilio Civit, Ministro de Obras Públicas.
Honorable William A. C. Barrington, Enviado Extraordinario y Ministro Plenipotenciario de Su Magestad Británica.

SENADORES

Tte. Gral. Bartolomé Mitre.
Dr. Rafael Igarzábal.
Sr. Pedro S. Barraza.
» Antonio P. García.
Dr. Francisco C. Figueroa.
Sr. L. J. Avellaneda.
» Calixto de la Torre.
Sr. Oseas Guiñazú.
» Antonio Díaz.
» Carlos Doncel.
» Domingo Morón.
» Francisco Uriburu.
Dr. Miguel Cané.

DIPUTADOS

Sr. Tomás Santa Coloma.
Dr. Rufino Varela Ortiz.
Sr. Pbro. Gregorio Romero.
Dr. Antonio Bermejo.
Sr. Melitón Panelo.
Dr. Ramón Santamarina.
Sr. Francisco P. Bollini.
Gral. Enrique Godoy.
Sr. Enrique Berduc.
» Ramón R. Parera.
Dr. José Fonrouge.
» Florencio Roberts
» Pastor Lacasa.
Sr. José I. Llovet.
» Gregorio de Laferrére.
» Bernabé Laínez.
Dr. Carlos F. Gómez.
» Julio Sánchez Viamonte.
Dr. Tomás R. Cullen.
Sr. Benjamin Giménez.
» Matías E. Godoy.
» Eugenio Alemán.
» Melitón Bruchman.
» Delfin Jijena.
» Juan E. Serú.
Dr. Juan Balestra.

Dr. Julián Barraquero.
Sr. Carlos Bouquet Roldán.
Dr. Benito Carrasco.
Sr. Adolfo Contte.
Dr. Emilio Gouchon.
» Miguel G. Morel.
Sr. Juan Valenzuela.
» Manuel Y. Reina.
Cnel. Ramón L. Falcón.
Sr. Jesús Fernández.
Cnel. Julio S. Dantas.
Dr. José M. Guastavino.
Sr. Ramón Lassaga.
» Sabá Z. Hernández.
» Félix Avellaneda.
» Arturo L. Dávalos.
» Tristán M. Almada.
» Eleazar Garzón.
Sr. Angel Machado.
Dr. Julio Olivero.
Sr. Maximio Ruíz.
» Fabio López García.
» Ezequiel de la Serna.
» Remigio Lescano.
» O. A. Lagos.
» Eduardo Sáinz.
» Alberto Lartigau.
» P. C. Iturralde.
Dr. Manuel Carlés.
Sr. J. M. Gutiérrez.
» A. V. Obligado.
» Mariano R. Martínez.
» Joaquín Villanueva.
Dr. Juan Carballido.
Sr. Mauricio P. Daract.

SUPREMA CORTE DE JUSTICIA NACIONAL

Dr. Benjamín Paz, Presidente.
Dr. Octavio Bunge.
Dr. Abel Bazán.
Dr. Juan E. Torrent.

Ing. Alfredo Demarchi, Vice-Gobernador de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.
Dr. Manuel M. Zorrilla, Presidente del Consejo Deliberante.
Dr. Antonio Martínez Rufino, Vice Presidente.
Dr. Jaime Llavallol, Secretario Privado del Presidente de la República.
Ing. Horacio Bustos Morón, Sub-Secretario del Ministerio de Obras Públicas.
Dr. José M. Bustillo, Fiscal de Guerra y Marina.
Cnel. Artemio Gramajo, Edecán del Presidente de la República.
Tte. Cnel. David Marambio Catán, idem idem.
Sr. Luís García, Prefecto General de Puertos.
Ing. Luís Luiggi, Director de las obras del Puerto Militar.
Sr. Jorge N. Williams, Secretario de la Intendencia Municipal de la Capital.
Gral. Manuel J. Campos.
» Francisco B. Bosch.
» José I. Garmendia.
Cnel. Ernesto Rodríguez.
Sr. Ramón López Lecube.
» Ignacio Sánchez.

Sr. Agustín Roca.
» Ataliva Roca.
» Carlos Guerrero.
» Ernesto Frías.
» Mauricio Mayer.
» José Varas, de *La Nación*.
Sr. Guillermo White (hijo).
» Epitacio del Campo.
» Lucas Córdoba.
» Nicolás Mihanovich.
» Benjamin Palacios.
» J. C. Guastavino.
» Hector Quesada, de *Tribuna*.
Sr. E. Canstatt Ropes, de *La Revista Patriótica*.
Sr. Ernesto Tornquist.
Sr. Dates.
» A. Macías.
» Salomón Vargas, de *Caras y Caretas*.
Sr. J. D. Monzon, idem.
Ing. Santiago Brian, Presidente de la Comisión Local del F. C. Oeste.
Ing. Sr. Guillermo White, Presidente de la Comisión Local del Ferrocarril del Sud.
Sr. H. C. Allen, Secretario del Directorio de Lóndres.
Sr. Frank Henderson, Gerente.
Sr. Tomás Gregory, Gefe de Tráfico.
Sr. Víctor Bertorini, Inspector de Tráfico.

Tren número 2

Dr. Carlos M. Morales.
Sr. Fortunato Gómez.
Ing. Juan F. Sarhy.
Sr. Juan Pirovano.
Ing. Enrique A. de Toledo.
» Emilio V. Bunge, (hijo).
» Arturo Castaño.
» Jorge Duclout.
Sr. Pedro Rueda.
» Eduardo Castex.
» A. R. Iglesias.
» J. T. Baca.
» Alfredo Cernadas.
» F. R. Rojas.
Ing. L. Valiente Noailles.
Sr. Antonio M. Pirán.
» Juan Girondo.
» Pedro Benegas.
» Ramón Lucero.
Sr. Guillermo Dominico.
» Pedro Cernadas.
» Tomás Nocetti.
» A. M. Wilson.
» Rodolfo Funke.
» Guillermo Navarro.
Dr. Gerónimo Amuchástegui.
Sr. Enrique Kohn, de *Buenos Aires Handels Zeitung*.
Sr. J. M. González, de *El Nacional*.
Sr. Claudio R. Pozuelo, de *La Prensa*.
Sr. Baldomero Videla.
» Claudio Martín.
» Tomás Harispuru.
» Estanislao M. Zevallos, (hijo).
» F. R. Brander.

Sr. Julio Emonet, de *Le Courrier Suisse*.
» Federico Lacroce.
» Juan Miguens.
» Ismael J. Piñero.
» Osvaldo M. Piñero.
» Domingo Noceti.
» L. M. Basset.
Dr. José J. Ceballos.
» Emilio Lamarca.
» T. Varsi.
Sr. E. Julio, de *La Nueva Provincia de BahiaBlanca*.
» A. Brunel.
» Miguel Morixe.
» Carlos M. Reyna.
» Ramón R. Castro, del *Diario del Comercio*.
» Renato Demartino.
» Benito E. Pérez
» A. Chovet.
» L. Descours.
» Carlos Stegmann.
Dr. D. Faustino Jorge.
Sr. Alfredo Seurot.
» O. Marambio Catán.
» Enrique J. Astorga.
» A. R. Devoto.
» M. A. Ocampo.
» J. P. Simson.
» O. Bunge.
» Felipe P. Pérez.
» F. García.
» M. A. Aguirre.
» Carlos M. Pérez.
» Domingo Frías.
» H. García Lagos.
» S. Mascías.
» E. Hudson.
» R. Otamendi.
Sr. Domingo F. Pérez.
» F. M. Heriot.
» José C. Paz.
» A. F. Ennor.
» Antonio Lanusse.
» Carlos M. Drabble.
» R. Ayerza.
Ing. C. Nystromer.
Sr. C. A. Kihlberg.
Cnel. E. Sellström.
Sr. Juan M. Burgos.
» Celedonio Castañeda.
» Eduardo Zimermann.
» Juan G. Tjarks, del *Deutshe La Plata Zeitung*.
Sr. Diedrich Mayer.
» Carlos Brian.
Ing. Carlos D. Duncan.
» Guillermo A. Cranwell
» C. C. Cumming.
» J. F. Galíndez.
» R. A. Thurburn.
» J. Anderson.
» T. D. Brooke.
» W. V. Burt, del *Standard*.
» Juan Glasgow.
» C. Wibberley.
» Duncan M. Munro.
» W. B. Harding Green
» David Simson.
» H. H. Loveday.
» William Galwey.
» Carlos Lockwood.
» H. D. Robinson.
Dr. J. O'Connor.
Sr. Juan C. Gibson.
» José N. Drysdale
» O. R. H. Bury.
» A. V. Linley.
» W. Parísh,

Sr. H. Partridge.
» J. Monteith Drysdale, del *Review of the River Plate.*
» C. Jewell.
» Akers, del *Times de Londres.*
» Alexander Hume.
» Isaac Cook.
» F. M. Still.
» G. R. Davenport.
» Brodie Henderson.
» R. I. Runciman.
» Percy Clark.
» J. Montague Pearce.
» J. Mulhall.
» O. J. Beck, Contador.

Ing. Carlos Malmén, Ingeniero Constructor de la linea al Neuquen.
Sr. R. Gould, Gefe de Material y Tracción del Ferrocarril del Sud.
» C. W. Mills, Gefe de Vía y Obras.
» J. Ballantyne, Gefe de Almacenes.
» H. G. Sketchley, Gefe de Plantel y Equipo.
» A. E. Coleman, Inspector de Tráfico.
» E. J. South, Inspector de Tráfico.

Tren número 3

Dr. Gabriel Carrasco.
Ing. César Visconti Venosta.
Sr. Claudio Bence.
» S. Pizarro Almagro.
» Antonio Leloir.
» José M. Trelles.
» Juan Cano.
» Francisco Ambrosetti.
» Emilio Massaro.
» Ramón Videla Dorna.
» Roberto Cano.
» Ricardo Frías.
Dr. S. F. Vázquez.
Sr. José M. de Nevares.
» Carlos T. Becú.
» Pastor Senillosa.
» Francisco Monasterio.
» E. Shaw.
» Sixto J. Quesada.
» José G. Balcarce.

Sr. Manuel J. Aguirre.
» T. Alemann.
Ing. Carlos C. Olivera.
Dr. Pedro Carrasco.
Sr. Miguel Lanús.
» Liborio Luna.
» Enrique Sundblad.
Dr. Alfredo Domínguez.
Sr. Federico M. Terrero.
Dr. Pedro Coronado.
Sr. A. Mac Nally.
Ing. Adolfo F. Buttner.
Sr. E. P. Martínez de Hoz.
» J. Trillia.
Dr. José A. Frías.
Sr. J. A. Senillosa.
» Martín Biedma.
» Julio Peña.
» Manuel Laínez, de *El Diario.*

Sr. Luís García.
» Florentino Barros.
» Melchor G. Rom.
Dr. Alberto V. López.
Sr. H. Sheperd, de *El Tiempo*.
Dr. Federico R. Cibils.
Ing. Eduardo E. Clerice.
Sr. Eduardo Olivera.
» Angel Peluffo.
Dr. Luís Belaústegui.
Sr. A. G. Villate.
Dr. Antonio V. Velar.
Sr. Carlos Thays.
» Belisario Lynch.
Dr. Santiago G. O'Farrell.
» Miguel O'Farrell.
» John Alston.
Sr. Samuel Hale Pearson.
» Charles Firth.
» G. P. Newell.
» C. H. Monzies.
» Charles Pearson.
» Mc Clymont Reid.
Dr. Dardo Rocha.
Sr. Luis Ortiz Basualdo.
» B. Ocampo.
» E. García Merou.
» Luís A. Huergo.
» T. E. Preston.
» J. A. Villalonga.
» José Toso.
» Nicholas Williams

Sr. Edward Jacobs.
» D. W. Lowe, del ***Herald.***
» Isaac Oyler.
» S. Quesada (hijo).
» D. Baccani, del *Times of Argentina.*
» G. Evans.
« C. J. Tetley.
« Charles Dawney.
« E. T. Puleston.
« A. H. Howard.
« J. C. Walker.
« T. S. Boadle.
» J. Felton.
» E. Schwind.
» W. Bulfin de ***Southern Cross.***
» G. T. Crane, Miembro de la Comisión Local del Ferrocarril del Sud.
» C. H. Krabbé, id. id.
» D. J. Hickey, Secretario de la Comisión Local.
Dr. Manuel Moyano, Abogado.
» Norberto R. Fresco, Abogado.
Sr. Antonio Claraz, Agente de tierras.
» P. T. Philp, Inspector de Tráfico.
» H. E. Hopson, Inspector de Tráfico.

INAUGURACIÓN AL NEUQUEN — TREN NÚM. 3

EL VIAJE

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Vencidas todas las numerosas dificultades inherentes á la organización prolija y detallada de una fiesta tan complicada como la inauguración de una línea férrea á centenares de leguas de los centros de recursos y en medio de un desierto partieron de Constitución, en la mañana del 31 de Mayo, los tres trenes oficiales á las horas que se les había señalado de antemano.

En medio de la mayor cordialidad, confortablemente instalados y mejor servidos, se hizo el viaje sin incidentes de ningun género, salvo las manifestaciones con que las autoridades y pueblos de las diversas localidades que atraviesa la línea, celebraron el paso del señor Presidente de la República y su comitiva.

En la tarde de ese primer día, ya comenzó á circular entre los invitados de los diversos trenes, la versión de que las aguas desbordadas del Río Negro no permitirían la llegada hasta el punto terminal de la línea, y en la madrugada del

primero de Junio se supo oficialmente que, pasando « Chelforó » las aguas cubrían ya los rieles.

Apesar de esto, el señor Presidente de la República, deseoso de que la comitiva conociera el famoso valle del Río Negro, dió orden de continuar la marcha hasta donde se pudiera, orden que fué inmediatamente cumplida, partiendo los trenes de Bahía Blanca en la misma madrugada del primero.

Cuando amaneció, ya los trenes se hallaban costeando el Río Colorado, que fué saludado por los paseantes, quiénes descendidos de los coches en la Estación « Pichi-Mahuida » tomaron posesión material del pintoresco río en medio de las más entusiastas aclamaciones.

Entre tanto, las noticias de la gravedad de la inundación continuaban llegando, y formada la convicción de que no sería posible llegar á Roca, se ansiaba conocer por lo menos el Río Negro, su valle y el aspecto general de la comarca.

Dada nuevamente la orden de marcha, se comenzó la célebre travesía, ó sea la cruzada del árido desierto que separa el Río Colorado del Río Negro, llegándose por fin á « Choele-Choel ».

Desde las ventanillas del tren, que en esos puntos corre por las altas barrancas que cierran el valle del Río Negro, pudo contemplarse el extraño panorama de una comarca invadida por las aguas. A lo lejos, entre las brumas, las verdes copas de los árboles de la isla de Choele-Choel; más lejos aún, el fondo ceniciento de las barrancas, y en todo el centro, una masa plateada, interrumpida por trozos de tierra grís veteado de verde obscuro.

En ese punto se supo que las aguas no habían aún atacado



Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República
y Señores. Demarchi, Zorrila y White

la vía, y en consecuencia se dió la orden de seguir adelante, con precaución, diciéndose que en el tren número 1 se celebraría, durante el almuerzo que se serviría en viaje, la inauguración oficial de toda la línea.

Terminado el almuerzo, una vez servido el Champagne, detenido definitivamente el tren por las aguas y cercados materialmente por estas en la Estación « Chimpay », ante el más majestuoso cuadro que la fantasía humana puede imaginar, fué solemnemente inaugurada la línea al Neuquen en medio de los estruendosos aplausos de la concurrencia, no sólo del tren del señor Presidente de la República, sino de los otros dos que acababan de llegar y que estendidos paralelamente en los tres desvíos de la Estación, habían confundido su concurrencia.

En el acto de la inauguración, leyerónse los discursos oficiales, á saber:

Carta del señor Frank Parish

Con gran sentimiento me encuentro privado del placer de acompañar á ustedes, presentes, para llenar los deberes que me corresponden que en otras ocasiones he tenido el honor de cumplir y que con tanto placer é interés hubiera llenado en la presente ocasión.

Deseo ofrecer al Presidente General Roca mi homenaje personal y amistoso, asegurándole la profunda admiración é interés que tengo por su persona y por el engrandecimiento de la nación argentina, deseando acompañar á todos y contribuir al buen éxito de su política progresista. La concurrencia establecida entre las dos naciones, cuyos límites son puestos hoy día en contacto por medio de este ferrocarril, será un nuevo triunfo pacífico para el General Roca, ofreciendo un camino para estrechar la mano entre los argentinos y chilenos y abrir una nueva época de paz y felicidad para las dos naciones.

Los años corren con rapidez y tengo que someterme á las debilidades de mi edad que han interrumpido la marcha de mis deseos y no me permiten sinó contemplar de lejos el futuro destino de la nación argentina y del Ferrocarril del Sud, que espero seguirán marchando unidos hasta el fin.

Dejo en manos hábiles y más enérgicas la dirección de los intereses del Ferrocarril del Sud, con plena confianza que sabrán llevar á cabo el cumplimiento de la obra, de modo que mi individualidad no significa nada. En el señor White, que presidirá hoy en nombre de la Compañía, en que tienen ustèdes un compañero y un ciudadano que merece, por sus antecedentes, tanto el respeto de ustedes como el de nosotros y que tiene las condiciones especiales que deseamos cultivar para demostrar nuestra plena confianza en los argentinos.

Él más que nadie, sabrá mantener la unión entre los intereses de la Compañía que representa con los del país de su nacimiento.

Tengo la felicidad de ser acompañado por una argentina que es mi esposa, de modo que no me será permitido nunca olvidar los gratos recuerdos de mi larga vida entre ustedes, que quedarán impresos en mi memoria. Algo tal vez he contribuído en mi esfera para completar la obra iniciada por mi respetado padre, el primer Enviado Británico que por medio del tratado con la República Argentina puso los cimientos del edificio internacional que tanto ha promovido los intereses y la unión de las dos nacionalidades y bajo cuyas inspiraciones he seguido mi tarea, cada día adquiriendo más fe en su porvenir.

Pido á todos aquí presentes, como á otros que no me hayan olvidado y especialmente á mi amigo el General Roca, que me permitan estrecharles la mano de lejos y aceptar este último recuerdo en prueba de mi afecto para éllos y para nuestra patria comùn.

FRANK PARISH

Londres, Abril 28 de 1899.

Discurso del señor White

Excelentísimo señor Presidente:

SEÑORES:

Alto honor me ha sido discernido por la Compañía del gran Ferrocarril del Sud al encargarme de su representación en el acto de la inauguración de esta línea al Neuquen, cuya construcción nos ha

facilitado los medios de recorrer en horas el largo trayecto de kilómetros que nos separan de Buenos Aires.

No olvideis, señores, que esta distancia, hace dos años, no podía ser salvada en menos de quince días, y eso con molestias y privaciones de todo género, sin excluir el peligro que bajo todas sus formas presentaba el desierto, áspero y huraño, y avaro hasta del agua.

Entre tanto, hoy día lo habeis cruzado sin sentir sus rachas heladas y sin que os haya atemorizado su imponente soledad; lo habeis visto, sí, pero como se siente al huracán, desde el abrigado sillón cercano al fuego.

Ante este prodigio del esfuerzo y de la inteligencia humana, no puede menos mi espíritu de recordar la frase con que la América saludó á la Europa, al transmitirle el primer telegrama al través del Océano Atlántico: gloria en el Cielo al Dios de las alturas, y paz en la tierra á los hombres de buena voluntad.

¡Hombres de buena voluntad! ¡Precisamente lo que esta gran obra representa!

Hombres de otra raza y de otra lengua que no han trepidado en confiarnos sus capitales para que nos abramos paso al través de los desiertos, llevando la civilización y el progreso á las más remotas regiones de nuestro inmenso territorio.

Y permitidme, señores, que os recuerde la frecuencia con que la buena voluntad del gobierno, del hombre y del capital inglés se han hecho sentir en nuestra historia.

Inglaterra fué la primera nación que reconoció nuestra existencia legítima ante el mundo; en Londres se le acordó su primer empréstito bajo el histórico gobierno del señor Rivadavia para la construcción del puerto de Buenos Aires; de esa nacionalidad fueron los primeros agricultores y ganaderos que vinieron al país, y á ellos se debe la introducción de los primeros tipos bovinos, ovinos y caballares que transformaron las primitivas é improductivas razas criollas en los selectos productos que hoy les enviamos á sus mercados.

Recordad también que, de un grupo de residentes ingleses, si bien auspiciados por algunos caballeros argentinos, surgió la vigorosa acción del señor David Robertson (después lord Marjoribanks), quién consiguió en Londres la formación de esta Compañía, allá por el año 1862, así que se reorganizara nuestra nación construyéndose enseguida la sección de Buenos Aires á Chascomús.

De ese grupo de hombres útiles, aún sobreviven los señores Drabble, Fair y el actual presidente, señor Parish, quiénes en ninguno de los momentos difíciles por que ha atravesado la República han dejado de hacer sentir su amor por este suelo.

Y esta corriente de simpatías y de capitales ingleses no se ha limitado sólo á las empresas ferrocarrileras; por el contrario, la encontrareis protegiendo todos los esfuerzos humanos; desde la más humilde industria hasta la más poderosa institución bancaria.

Merced á esos mismos capitales, yo no dudo, señores, que los territorios que acabais de recorrer y que este ferrocarril ha ligado con el Puerto de Bahía Blanca, serán dentro de un futuro no muy lejano el asiento de pueblos y ciudades; y que estas tierras sedientas y estériles saciarán su sed en las abundantes aguas del Colorado y del Río Negro, devolviéndole al hombre, centuplicado, el fruto de su trabajo, de su capital y de su inteligencia.

Y no abrigo dudas al respecto, precisamente porque veo al país entregado al trabajo y con una sola y noble aspiración en su gobierno y pueblo, el anhelo de la paz!

Pero, señores, para que esa paz sea verdaderamente fecunda, es menester el más perfecto equilibrio en los diversos elementos que constituyen la nacionalidad; es menester que su acción se desarrolle bajo el amparo de leyes justas y equitativas que protejan y estimulen el trabajo, y que se cumplan sin excepciones odiosas por parte de los poderes públicos y sin transgresiones dolosas por parte del pueblo.

Y, á propósito de esta aspiración hacia el ideal, permitidme, señor Presidente de la República, que os recuerde aquella frase de un célebre estadista inglés, que atribuía la grandeza de su país sólo al fiel cumplimiento de sus leyes, buenas ó malas, pero cumplidas sin vacilar.

Hago votos, señores, porque este ferrocarril, construído extrictamente dentro de las prescripciones de la ley-contrato que autorizó su existencia, sea el primer paso dado en el engrandecimiento de estos territorios, y que los esfuerzos de todos los hombres de buena voluntad que han contribuído con su trabajo ó capitales á esta gran obra, recojan el merecido fruto de su labor.

Ahora, señores, os pido os pongais de pié y me acompañeis á brindar porque nuestra patria sea grande y feliz dentro del armónico ejercicio de sus instituciones, y porque la más inalterable paz reine entre sus hijos y con sus hermanos.

Acompañadme también á brindar por el señor Presidente de la República y á desearle conmigo que, durante todos los años de su gobierno, pueda festejar el inmortal mes de Mayo con acontecimientos como el presente.

Señor Presidente de la República: servíos entregar al mundo civilizado el Ferrocarril al Neuquen. He dicho.

Discurso del señor Presidente de la República

SEÑORES:

Hace hoy precisamente veinte años que, al frente de un cuerpo de ejèrcito, llegué á estas márgenes del Río Negro para establecer en ellas las fuerzas militares que debían ponernos en posesión real y definitiva, de la Pampa y la Patagonia, cumpliéndose así una ley de la Nación y satisfaciéndose una aspiración y necesidad sentidas desde los primeros días de la conquista española.

El desierto, realmente, empezaba en esa época en las cercanías del pueblo del Azul; Olavarría, Carhué, Puan y Bahía Blanca, no eran sino fuertes militares, perdidos en la sábana inmensa de la Pampa, bajo cuyo amparo, apenas si vivían pequeños grupos de familias, en contínuas zozobras y temores.

Para llegar á la confluencia del Limay con el Neuquen, la división á mis inmediatas órdenes empleó cuarenta días de marcha contínua, atravesando territorios, de los cuales apenas se tenía vagas nociones y que la imaginación popular poblaba de innumerables tribus guerreras y de pavorosos misterios.

Veinte años hace que en este pintoresco valle, donde encontramos frescas las huellas del indio fugitivo, saludamos el sol de Mayo y levantamos nuestras tiendas al borde del caudaloso río, con la inmensa satisfacción de haber puesto término á una fecunda campaña, ensanchando los dominios de la patria y resolviendo para siempre el problema secular de las fronteras.

Al realizarse hoy esta nueva conquista, que es complemento de

aquella, permitidme, señores, que, ligando una y otra empresa, traiga á la memoria la expedición del 79, y recuerde á todos los compañeros de armas, en esa memorable jornada. Muchos de ellos no pueden asociarse á esta grandiosa fiesta de la civilización, que prepararon, sin embargo, cuando avanzaban paso á paso, soportando toda clase de privaciones y sufrimientos, en el camino del desierto, para que luego el colono, con sus rebaños é instrumentos agrícolas, pudiese tranquilamente explotar y cultivar el suelo, y el ferrocarril avanzase triunfante á recibir sus productos para transportarlos á los puertos y mercados consumidores.

Justo es recordar en este gran día al soldado argentino, que vivió en constante lucha con el salvaje y ha sido como el *pionneer* de nuestros progresos, en el espacio inmenso y cerrado por la barbarie, que el coloniaje nos dejó en herencia.

Señores: Este ferrocarril que nos permite realizar en pocas horas, cómoda y confortablemente, el trayecto que recorrieron las divisiones del ejército nacional soportando penosas fatigas, nació bajo la administración del Dr. Uriburu, en momentos difíciles y peligrosos para la República, obedeciendo á miras puramente estratégicas. La providencia, ó el buen sentido de los pueblos, ha querido que se convierta en un nuevo vínculo de paz y amistad con Chile, pues en vez de detenerse aquí ha de ir más tarde á buscar el Pacífico á través de la Cordillera de los Andes.

En tales circunstancias, el Directorio del Ferrocarril del Sud, como si tuviese una visión clara del futuro, sin hacer cálculos estrechos, sin vacilar un instante, acometió la obra, que el Gobierno requería en nombre de la seguridad nacional. No ahorró dinero, ni tiempo, ni esfuerzo y tendió los rieles desde Bahía Blanca al Neuquen, con una celeridad sin ejemplo entre nosotros. Es este un nuevo y hermoso testimonio de los beneficios que debe el país al capital y al génio emprendedor de los ingleses.

Al reconocerlo así, no podemos olvidar á ese núcleo de hombres enérgicos y resueltos que fundaron la Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud, y entre los cuales habeis nombrado á los señores Drabble, Fair y su actual presidente, señor Parish, viejos y consecuentes amigos de la República Argentina. Debo también asociar vuestro nombre, señor White, al de aquellos que, trabajando por el bien y progreso del país, han conquistado los mejores títulos à su gratitud.

La Empresa del Ferrocarril del Sud se ha desarrollado con la vida nacional. Teniendo en 1865 poco más de cien kilómetros de

extensión y un capital de 750.000 libras, recorre hoy 3500 kilómetros y representa un capital de 21.000.000 de libras: notable ejemplo de la marcha de una grande Compañía, y de los beneficios que encuentra aquí el capital en manos de hombres inteligentes y prácticos en los negocios.

Con tal auxilio, los territorios que acabamos de recorrer serán sin duda, en tiempo no lejano, como lo habeis dicho, asiento de poblaciones y de industrias nuevas. Su irrigación es fácil, aprovechando los ríos caudalosos que la naturaleza ha puesto á su servicio.

No pasarán muchos años sin que este valle del Río Negro, principalmente, á semejanza del valle del Nilo, dotado de una fertilidad igualmente asombrosa, se convierta en un emporio de producción y de riqueza.

Llegamos felizmente á una época en que podemos entregarnos á toda clase de perspectivas halagüeñas. La República está en paz con todas las naciones. El orden es inconmovible en su seno, y los anhelos de progreso se revelan con un vigor extraordinario, encarándose el porvenir con tranquilidad y confianza.

Bajo estos auspicios, señores, me es grato declarar inaugurada la línea férrea de Bahía Blanca al Neuquen.

Cablegrama del Directorio de Londres

LONDRES, Mayo 31. — Southern Railway saluda al Presidente de la República y sus compañeros, ofreciendo sus más vivas felicitaciones por la conquista pacífica de nuevo territorio, atravesado por el Ferrocarril del Sud, deseando que la inauguración de esta línea sea fecunda y abra una nueva época civilizadora para esas regiones remotas de la República.

Honor al General Julio A. Roca, el iniciador de esta obra benéfica, y á los argentinos que lo han acompañado en su nueva conquista del desierto. — *Frank Parish.*

Discurso del Ministro de Inglaterra, señor Barrington

Señor Presidente:

SEÑORES:

Deseo expresar mi agradecimiento por el inesperado honor hecho á mi país y su soberana. A mí me gusta más oir que hablar y aún en inglés no sabría decir todo lo que siento, apropiado á tal ocasión, pero tratándose de expresar mis sentimientos en español, me siento lo mismo que un hombre obligado á correr metido en una bolsa contra otro que tuviera las piernas libres. Confieso mi inhabilidad con vergüenza, pero el hecho queda de que tengo la lengua atada.

Al mismo tiempo no puedo menos que aludir al interés especial que siento personalmente en la excursión, en la cual tomamos parte, gracia á los esfuerzos de la Gran Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud, tan honorablemente representada por nuestro compañero de coche (Mr. White), porque cuando estaba antes en el país, hace unos 15 años, he sido uno de una partida que antes de que la inauguración oficial tuviera lugar, fué sobre la extensión que entonces se estaba haciendo á Bahía Blanca.

En aquellos días la línea sólo estaba abierta al tráfico hasta La Gama, (hoy General Lamadrid); un tren de material nos llevó hasta la cabeza de los rieles en Pigué y desde allí fuimos á caballo y en coche hasta Sauce Chico, algún sitio cerca del presente Tornquist, desde donde otro tren improvisado nos llevó á Bahía Blanca.

Ahora, además de la línea completada en 1884, una segunda corre hasta el mismo punto; se había establecido una más directa, vía Cañuelas á Las Flores, mientras que otras líneas han sido abiertas á Mar del Plata, Necochea y también á Guaminí, formando así una extensa red que escasamente se completaría en el tiempo de mi primer conocimiento del país. No puedo menos que sentirme orgulloso de que el desarrollo de esta gran Empresa, y las mejoras producidas en las condiciones del territorio de la República, se deben en gran parte á la energía de mis compatriotas, tanto en Inglaterra como aquí, donde se han demostrado buenos Anglo-Argentinos, como eran buenos Argentinos-Anglos, cuando volvían á cruzar el Océano.

Americanos, Argentinos y Anglo-Sajones, todos empiezan con la letra A; nosotros, como nación marítima, clasificamos nuestros mejores buques A I y espero que, trabajando todos juntos los que estamos comprendidos en esta primera letra del alfabeto, trataremos de mantenernos los primeros, en las empresas pacíficas del mundo.

En conclusión, creo de buen augurio que la primera línea á Bahía Blanca, lo mismo que la presente extensión haya sido completada bajo los auspicios del mismo hombre eminente y distinguido General, que había probado la cordialidad de sus sentimientos hacia nosotros los ingleses, y que como ahora ocupaba la alta posición de Jefe del Estado en cuyos dominios estas importantes obras se han ejecutado.

He dicho.

Discurso del señor Woodbine Parish

Señor Presidente: Señores Ministros:

SEÑORES:

Al pedir permiso para dirigir algunas palabras á esta distinguida reunión de caballeros argentinos, ingleses y de otras nacionalidades, en presencia del digno señor Presidente de la República, no tengo otro título sino el de ser hijo del Presidente de la Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sud, cuya avanzada edad le impide emprender un nuevo viaje desde Inglaterra para ocupar el puesto que hoy le corresponde en esta fiesta, y contribuir, como hubiere deseado, en hacer los honores á su distinguido y viejo amigo, el General Roca, y al mismo tiempo estrechar la mano á sus amigos de aquí.

Nadie mejor que un hijo conoce á fondo los sentimientos de su padre, y puedo con toda sinceridad asegurar á todos los aquí presentes, que nadie participa con más placer que él, en todo lo que concierne al progreso y prosperidad de este país, y nadie tiene más

orgullo en contemplar el magnífico resultado del Ferrocarril del Sud, uno de los elementos principales de la grandeza del país, á cuyo fin ha dedicado tantos años de su vida.

Puedo también decir que al ceder su puesto hoy al señor White, lo hace con toda confianza, reconociendo que en sus manos la fiesta no perderá nada de importancia, y que la representación de una Compañía Inglesa por un argentino, será aceptada como una prueba de nuestra gran estima de su personalidad y de nuestra confraternidad con los argentinos.

Al concluir estas observaciones, deseo expresar á los honorables caballeros que han hablado y á la distinguida concurrencia que se halla presente, las màs expresivas gracias por los términos elogiosos con que se ha hecho mención del nombre de mi señor Padre, y por la manera halagadora con que ellos han sido recibidos.

Al señor Presidente Roca, y á sus conciudadanos, hago presente los ardientes deseos porque la República Argentina continúe prosperando y porque en un porvenir no lejano ocupe su lugar predestinado entre las grandes potencias del mundo.

Concluida la emocionante ceremonia y constatada la increible rapidez con que las aguas continuaban su invasión, se decidió el inmediato regreso de los trenes, poniéndose en marcha una máquina piloto, conducida por el señor Gefe de Tráfico, quién en previsión de cualquier contratiempo llevó consigo algunos peones y elementos de defensa.

El tren número 3, que era el que llevaba la orquesta del maestro Furlotti, contratada para el Banquete, despidió al convoy presidencial con los acordes del Himno Nacional, cuyo coro final fué saludado con entusiastas aclamaciones y vivas á la patria.

Perdido de vista dicho tren, sucesivamente partieron los números 2 y 3, con veinte minutos de diferencia entre sí.



ESTACIÓN CHIMPAY

El trayecto entre « Chimpay » y « Choele-Choel » fué recorrido con verdadera ansiedad por cuanto la avenida de las aguas había aumentado, cubriendo ya algunos puntos de la línea y haciendo verdaderamente peligroso el paso de una alcantarilla que la violencia de las aguas amenazaba derribar.

Felizmente, el Gefe de Tráfico, que había conducido en la máquina piloto algunos peones, se hallaba en el punto de peligro, y ayudado por ellos había revestido el borde de los terraplenes con algunos durmientes, que permitieron el paso de los trenes, entre el rumor del verdadero torrente que se precipitaba á traves de la alcantarilla.

Incorporado el Gefe de Tráfico al último wagón del último tren, conjurando el evidente peligro de haber quedado sitiados por las aguas, el viaje de regreso á «Choele-Choel» y después á « Fortín Uno », se hizo en las condiciones más agradables.

En esta última Estación, en medio de la imponente soledad del desierto, en una tibia noche de otoño, se reunieron otra vez los trenes, celebrándose el improvisado banquete con que la Compañía obsequiaba en sus coches comedores al señor Presidente de la República y demás invitados, ya que la fuerza de lo imprevisto la había privado del placer de efectuarlo en Roca, como se había decidido.

La más franca alegría y correcta libertad reinó en cada uno de los comedores, haciéndose en todos ellos verdadera gala de talento y de buen humor.

Los exquisitos vinos y licores y los alegres acordes de la orquesta dirigida por el señor Furlotti, contribuyeron á prestar mayor animación al banquete, y hasta altas horas de la noche los respectivos trenes arrojaban á traves de las

pampas del desierto, los rumorosos ecos de la brillante fiesta que en ellos se celebraba.

Se distribuyeron medallas conmemorativas de oro y plata y se leyeron en todos los comedores los discursos que habían sido leídos en el tren número 1.




FACSÍMILE DE LAS MEDALLAS REPARTIDAS
CON MOTIVO DE LA INAUGURACIÓN DE LA PROLONGACIÓN
DEL GRAN FERROCARRIL DEL SUD AL NEUQUÉN

Hicieron uso de la palabra además, el doctor Ernesto Frías, Ex-Ministro Oriental; señores Machado, Falcón, Bernabé Laínez, Diputados doctores O'Farrell, Morel, Gouchon y Carrasco, Doctores Lamarca, O'Conor y Fresco y señores Wibberley, Krabbé, Allen, Thurburn, Runciman, Munro, Cook, Drysdale, Galway, Paton, Partridge, Loveday, etc.

Terminada la fiesta y siendo las doce de la noche, partieron otra vez los tres trenes en dirección á Bahía Blanca,

donde volverían á juntarse para visitar al día siguiente las obras del Puerto Militar, con excepción del señor Presidente de la República y algunos de sus acompañantes que decidieron volver á Buenos Aires.

Separado del convoy el carruaje presidencial, partió este en las primeras horas del dia 2 de Junio, llegando á la Capital Federal en la noche del mismo día.

Entretanto, el resto de la comitiva se trasladó á un tren especial formado sólo de los coches comedores de los tres trenes, y partiendo á eso de las diez a. m. en dirección á Punta Sin Nombre, donde fueron recibidos por el Ingeniero Constructor señor Luiggi, quién hizo conocer detenidamente á la concurrencia las fortificaciones y Puerto Militar que, gracias á su talento y competencia, va á poseer el país.

Detenida la comitiva en el fuerte número 3, oido el Himno Nacional en medio del más religioso silencio, tronaron los cuatro cañones de 24 y sus pesadas balas al caer á enormes distancias en medio del Océano Atlántico y levantando verdaderas montañas de agua, hicieron comprender á la concurrencia que esas bocas de fuego sabrían rechazar al temerario que en mala hora se le ocurriera invadir el suelo Argentino.

Pasados al fuerte número 7, procedieron los señores Ministros del Ejecutivo á descubrir el escudo de la patria, esculpido en granito, que corona el fuerte, y después de visitar los demás que se estienden á lo largo de la costa y que se hallan ya muy adelantados, volvió la concurrencia al Puerto de Bahía Blanca, donde se organizaron nuevamente los tres primitivos trenes, partiendo para Buenos Aires con diferencia de una hora entre sí y llegando á esta Capital en la tarde del día siguiente 3 de Junio.

PREPARATIVOS

DISTRIBUCIÓN DE INVITACIONES

En la repartición de invitaciones la Comisión Local ha tenido que desempeñar una tarea importante, que requería al mismo tiempo mucho tacto y discreción. Para evitar las dificultades que pudieran presentarse á los invitados en el momento de instalarse en los sitios que se les había designado de antemano, se les tuvo perfectamente al corriente de los arreglos que se adoptaban para su comodidad.

Lo primero que había que tratar, porque era lo más complicado del asunto, era la organización de los tres trenes. El punto esencial era que el Ferrocarril precaviera todo, y al mismo tiempo cuidara que el carácter representativo de la concurrencia se observase rigurosamente, así como la vinculación de los unos con los otros para su conveniente ubicación.

Entre los invitados se contaban Ministros, Senadores, Diputados, Jueces, Accionistas, Representantes de las diversas ramas del Comercio, de la alta Banca, de Compañías de Seguros, de Empresas de Navegación, Abogados y Hacen-

dados, como asímismo representantes de otros Ferrocarriles y de la Prensa; todos tenían que ser convenientemente distribuidos entre los tres trenes, proporcionándoles las comodidades que contribuyeran á hacer más agradable la excursión, designándoles el asiento que debían ocupar en la mesa del banquete, etcétera.

Con este objeto se enviaron circulares á todas las personas que se deseaba invitar, rogándoles contestaran si aceptaban ó no, y á medida que se iban recibiendo las aceptaciones, se preparaban listas de los convidados, y á cada persona que manifestaba su intención de concurrir, se le designaba el número de coche, cama y compartimento del tren en que viajaría y el número que le correspondía en la mesa del banquete. De las listas que se hicieron de los trenes y los coches, y de los planos de la mesa del banquete, se repartieron varias copias entre el personal de los trenes y el encargado de los arreglos para el banquete en Villa Roca. Una vez resuelta definitivamente la designación del puesto que debía ocupar cada concurrente, se mandó preparar la cantidad de programas necesarios con el objeto de ser repartidos entre las personas que habían aceptado, en los que se indicaba claramente el número del tren en que debía viajar la persona cuyo nombre se indicaba en él, la hora de la partida de Plaza Constitución, el número de su cama y compartimento, y el de su asiento en la mesa del banquete.

Estos programas contenían tres cupones, correspondientes uno al viaje de ida, otro al de retorno y el último al banquete, los que debían ser presentados por el tenedor toda vez que le fueran requeridos por un empleado caracterizado de la Compañía, para evitar de este modo que un pasagero ocupara el lugar destinado á otro, ocasionando así confusiones.

Junto con la tarjeta de invitación, y en el mismo sobre, cada invitado recibió su respectivo programa, todo dentro de una elegante cubierta especialmente diseñada al efecto.

Terminada la distribución de tarjetas y programas á los invitados, varios de los que habían prometido asistir, manifestaron á última hora que no les era posible efectuarlo, por causas imprevistas, dando con esto lugar á que la Comisión Local aprovechara tal circunstancia para dar esas invitaciones á otras personas que las habían solicitado anteriormente pero, á quién hasta entonces, no había sido posible satisfacer por no haber sitio disponible.

Esto hizo necesaria la modificación de las listas de los trenes, coches, camas y mesa del banquete; la que se llevó á cabo con toda regularidad, siendo preciso proveer al personal encargado de los trenes, de listas corregidas que sustituyeran á las que habían recibído antes, á fin de que no ocurrieran dificultades de ningun género en el momento del embarque.

Estas medidas evitaron á última hora confusiones y nadie encontró inconvenientes para instalarse en el lugar que se le tenía designado en los trenes, y que la partida de estos pudiera efectuarse puntualmente á las horas fijadas por el Departamento de Tráfico.



TARJETA DE INVITACIÓN

COMPAÑIA
DEL
GRAN FERRO CARRIL
DEL
SUD

INAUGURACION
PROLONGACION AL NEUQUEN
JUNIO 1º 1899



PROGRAMA

FORMACION DE LOS TRENES

La formación de cada uno de los trenes fué la siguiente:

Tren número 1

Máquina.
Depósito de agua.
Furgón para el Guarda, y elementos para limpiar coches.
Coche dormitorio para el personal del tren.
Furgón para comestibles, etcétera.
Tres coches comedores.
Cinco coches dormitorios.
Coche de Su Excelencia el Señor Presidente de la República.
Coche oficial.

Tren número 2

Máquina.
Depósito de agua.
Furgón para el Guarda y elementos para limpiar coches.
Coche dormitorio para el personal del tren.
Furgón para comestibles.
Tres coches comedores.
Seis coches dormitorios.
Coche oficial.

Tren nùmero 3

Máquina.
Depósito de agua.
Furgón para el Guarda y elementos para limpiar coches.
Coche dormitorio para el personal del tren.
Un furgón pequeño.
Coche cocina.
Tres coches comedores.
Cinco coches dormitorios.
Coche oficial.

La salida de los trenes se fijó para las 7, 7 1/2 y 8. a. m., respectivamente, y aun cuando el primer tren salió un poco atrasado, no por esto se demoró la salida de los otros dos.

HORARIO D

IDA

31 de Mayo 1899.

ESTACIONES	*Espl. N.° 1*	*Espl. N.° 2*	*Espl. N.° 3*	OBSERVACIONES
	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	
Plaza Constitución	7. 0	7.30	8. 0	
Temperley	7.20	7.50	8.25	
Llavallol			8.37 x 28	
Ezeiza		8. 16 x 28		
T. Suárez	8.6 x 28			
Cañuelas	8.45	9. 0	9.55	
Videla Dorna	10. 0	10.15	11.10	Tren 3 correrá Ranchos
Las Flores	11.30	11.45	P. M. 12.45 x 48	
C. Tejedor	P. M. 12. 10 x 48	P. M. 12.20 x 48	1.15 x 2	
Pardo	x 2	x 2		
Hinojo				
Olavarría	3.10	3.20	4.10	Precaución—2° E
La Madrid	5.10	5.20	6.50 x 18	
La Colina ...... *Lleg.*	5.50	6. 2		
" " .... *Sal.*	6. 0 x 18	6.15 x 18	7.30	
Saavedra	8.30	9. 0	10.15	
B. Blanca	11.30	A. M. 1/6 12. 0	A, M. 1/6 1.15	
El Puerto .... *Lleg.*	11.45	12.15	1.30	
" " .... *Sal.*	A. M. 1/6 12.15	12.45	2.00	
Fortín Uno			9. 5x*mixto 2*	
B. Zorrilla	8.5x*mixto 2*	8.35x*mixto 2*		
Río Negro (Roca)	P. M. 12.55	P. M. 1.25	P. M. 3. 5	
Neuquen	2.25	2.55	4.25	
Neuquen	4.25x*Espl. 3*	4.55	5.25	
Río Negro (Roca)	5.45	6.15	6.45	

'S TRENES DE

REGRESO

2 de Junio 1899.

:STACIONES	*Espl. N.° 1*	*Espl. N.° 2*	*Espl. N.° 3*	OBSERVACIONES
	Mediodía	P. M.	P. M.	
Negro (Roca) . . .	12 0	12 20	1 0	
	P. M.			
foró.	2 20	2 40	3 20	
le Choel.	4 0	4 20	5 0	
amín Zorrilla . . .	5 0x*mixto 1*	5 20x*mixto 1*	6 0x*mixto 1*	
Colorado.	9 0	9 15	10 0	
	A. M. 3/6	A M. 3/6	A. M. 3/6	
'uerto. . . . . . *Llég.*	1 40	1 55	2 40	
" . . . . . *Sal.*	2 10	2 25	3 10	
a Blanca.	2 25	2 40	3 25	
'edra.	5 55 x 65	6 10 x 65	7 0 x 65	
Colina.			10 20 x 61	
Madrid.	9 25 x 61	9 40 x 61	11 10	
	P. M.	P. M.	P. M.	
'arría.	12 05 x 27	12 20	1 40	
l.	1 20	1 35	3 20 x 17	
sh.	2 30 x 17	2 40 x 17		
Flores.	4 20 p 2	4 30 p 2	6 0 p 2	Tren 27 correrá vía Ranchos.
ıelas.	7 10	7 25	9 0	
imo Paz.			9 35 x 55	
te Grande.			10 6 x 61	
perley.	8 20 x 55	8 35 x 55	10 25	Tren 55 saldrá 30 minutos después de hora - de kilómetro 5.
a Constitución. . .	8 45	9 0	10 50	

Locomotoras

Se emplearon en total diez y siete máquinas para la tracción de los tres trenes, cada uno de los cuales estaba compuesto de unos cincuenta y cuatro ejes, igual á trescientas cincuenta toneladas. El servicio de máquinas fué dividido en tres secciones y en diferentes puntos del camino se colocaron cinco máquinas de reserva para precaverse contra cualquier accidente imprevisto, que pudiera ocurrir en el arrastre de los trenes. Felizmente, no hubo necesidad de hacer uso de dichas máquinas puesto que el servicio fué bien desempeñado por las que habían sido destinadas á él.

El decorado de las máquinas estaba formado por el Escudo Nacional al frente de cada una de ellas; un trofeo compuesto de un pico, pala, y pie de cabra, (atributos ferrocarrileros) adornado con banderas argentinas é inglesas á cada lado, sobre las ruedas motrices, y á los costados de la plataforma del maquinista, el escudo de la Compañía, llevando en su parte superior una leyenda con la palabra NEUQUEN, adornado también con banderas argentinas é inglesas, y los pasamanos forrados con lanilla azul y blanca. La colocación de los adornos, requirió cuidadoso estudio, pues era necesario asegurarlos de manera que no los llevara el viento y al mismo tiempo arreglarlos de tal forma que pudieran ser cambiados fácilmente. En consecuencia se hicieron aparatos de hierro apropósito para tres juegos de decoraciones. El tablero del centro que demuestra las manos unidas y el gorro frigio (escudo argentino) fueron pintados en madera y los marcos, sol naciente, hojas de laurel, y cañones, fueron fundidos en bronce y pintados en Sola.

Las locomotoras eran manejadas por maquinistas expertos y un inspector viajaba en cada una.

La lubrificación de los vehículos se llevó á cabo también de una manera satisfactoria como lo atestigua el hecho de no haberse calentado ninguno de los ejes del tren rodante de la Compañía. El regreso se efectuó también sin que haya habido fracaso alguno.

Servicio

Se dispuso que cada tren fuese acompañado por dos inspectores de tráfico, los que vigilaron la marcha, tomando las medidas necesarias en cada estación de parada para efectuar las maniobras, suministro de agua ó gas á los coches, ó cualquier otra necesidad del servicio que se presentase, con la menor demora posible.

Para el servicio personal de los tres trenes, se seleccionaron buenos guardas, camareros, etc. La distribución de los camareros se hizo á razón de tres hombres para cada dos coches, á fin de que, relevándose unos á otros pudiesen descansar y prestar al mismo tiempo la atención debida á los pasajeros, permaneciendo constantemente uno de ellos en servicio de cada coche para lo que pudiese ocurrir. Cada dormitorio fué provisto de útiles para limpieza de calzado y ropa, y los camareros cumplieron con este requisito á satisfacción.

Buffet

El servicio prestado por el departamento de confiterías ha sido el siguiente, dividido en dos secciones; á saber:

1.° Servicio de coches comedores.

2.° Servicio de banquete en Roca.

Servicio de coches comedores

Se resolvió agregar á los tres trenes especiales, ocho co-

ches comedores y un coche cocina con capacidad total de 304 asientos.

Para hacer este servicio se emplearon tres coches nuevos recién construidos, dos coches de reserva existentes, un coche cocina que había estado fuera de uso, un salón de primera clase convertido en comedor, sacándose además dos coches comedores del movimiento ordinario de los trenes, eligiéndose aquellos que no pudieran originar inconvenientes al servicio.

Todos los comedores fueron provistos de útiles de cocina, vinos, licores, cigarros y conservas y toda otra clase de mercaderías necesarias, las que fueron distribuidas en cada coche por partes iguales.

En cada tren iba un inspector jefe del personal de los coches y un peon encargado del cuidado, distribución y conservación de los víveres frescos en el furgón. En el primer tren iba también el jefe del departamento de confiterías.

Los almuerzos y cenas se prepararon según los menús entregados de antemano á cada cocinero.

A causa de la inundación de la línea, que impidió la prosecución de los trenes hasta Roca, hubo que preparar la comida (que se había calculado tuviera lugar en dicho punto) para servirla en la estación «Fortin Uno», donde los tres trenes quedaron parados.

Aun cuando no se había calculado dicha comida extra, pudo llevarse á cabo sin dificultad alguna, alcanzando bién las provisiones y mercaderías que había en los furgones. Las únicas provisiones frescas que fué necesario adquirir en viaje, fueron una pequeña cantidad de pescado, pan y leche que se pidió por telégrafo y consiguió en Bahía Blanca.

Banquete en Roca

El servicio del banquete en Roca no pudo llevarse á cabo por causa de la inundación que hizo imposible el avance de los trenes mas allá de « Chimpay ». Todos los preparativos habían sido ya terminados, encontrándose todo listo para efectuar el banquete en Roca.

Los víveres frescos salieron, junto con el personal, con fecha 27 de Mayo, en wagones frigoríficos. Las mercaderías de vinos, licores, conservas etc., habían sido ya enviadas á Roca una semana antes, con excepción del champagne y cigarros que recién el 28 de Mayo llegaron á su destino debido á la interrupción de la línea y fueron recogidos por el primer tren especial en Choele-Choel.

Para las mesas se hicieron tarjetas con el número de cada una y número de asiento; haciéndose así mismo números en duplicado para el guarda-ropas. El servicio de mozos fué arreglado de manera que un mozo pudiera servir á cinco personas.

Preparativos en Villa Roca

Los rieles habían llegado el 18 del mismo mes hasta el punto donde debe empezar el viaducto y puente sobre el Río Neuquen. De allí hasta el mismo río se había colocado una vía provisoria atravesando los cañadones y pequeños brazos que existen en sus inmediaciones, con el fin de que la concurrencia pudiera admirar de cerca el magestuoso río, que en la ocasión estaba bastante crecido.

Para poder dar vuelta á los trenes de inauguración, de modo que pudieran marchar de regreso en el mismo orden que á la ida, se había colocado en el extremo de la línea un triángulo con capacidad suficiente para los tres trenes, debiendo el primero, á su llegada allí, entrar en él, dar vuelta, y

después retroceder hasta la orilla del río para colocarse después en la vía principal, esperando la llegada de los otros dos trenes, que harían la misma maniobra, dejando así lugar para que regresara á Roca el primer tren y á su turno el segundo y finalmente el tercero.

Cerca del extremo se había colocado también un desvío muerto para maniobras y un molino de viento con dos depósitos de agua para las máquinas y los estanques para los coches.

En la parte de la vía principal, comprendida en el triángulo, se había colocado un gran arco de triunfo con banderas y emblemas apropiados.

En el pueblo

Se había erigido aquí un gran galpón de fierro galvanizado de 56 m. × 10 m. para celebrar el banquete inaugural al regreso del Neuquen.

Al efecto deberían reunirse aquí, hasta las 6 30 p. m. del día 1.° de Junio, los tres trenes.

El galpón comprendia : el salón principal de 49 metros de largo habiendo en un extremo una pieza para guardaropa con perchas numeradas para 270 personas, y en el opuesto otra igual para la banda de música. Las dos se comunicaban con el salón por medio de grandes ventanas arqueadas y adornadas con cortinaje.

El salón principal estaba en su totalidad adornado con géneros, banderas y escudos.

El techo con los colores argentinos, azul y blanco, colocados á lo largo del salón y las maderas de los tijerales, que sobresalían fuera de la inclinación del techo, se habían ocultado por medio de guirnaldas con los colores ingleses.

Las paredes se habían dividido en paños, limitados cada

uno por columnas pintadas y entre ellas se había extendido un género amarillo cuyo centro estaba ocupado por una rueda con alas pintadas en colorado y blanco.

Sobre los pilares y en varias otras partes se habían colocado escudos con banderas inglesas y argentinas.

En la parte superior de las paredes y en el punto de arranque del techo habían guirnaldas de género azul, blanco y colorado.

El piso estaba tapizado con una rica alfombra de color granate. El todo hacía un efecto excelente.

Las mesas del banquete consistían en tres cuerpos, compuestos cada uno de una mesa á lo largo del salón, de la cual se desprendía á distancia conveniente una de otra, mesas transversales. En la del centro, donde estaba el asiento del Presidente, miembros del Congreso, etc., habían tres de estas y en las otras cinco.

En el centro de la mesa del medio había un adorno, representando un ferrocarril al pié de una montaña.

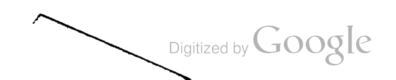
La iluminación se hacía por medio de una instalación eléctrica con capacidad para 140 luces, las que se habían distribuído convenientemente por el maderamen del techo. Sobre la mesa del medio habíase colocado un sol, compuesto de lamparitas eléctricas.

El exterior del galpón estaba adornado con gallardetes, banderas y emblemas.

En la mesa del banquete habían asientos para 275 personas.

Agregado al costado del galpón y en el medio del mismo habíase hecho otro pequeño para la cocina y sus dependencias.

Mientras que se hacían estos preparativos, el Río Negro,



que antes era bastante alto, seguía creciendo y llegó el 31 de Mayo, día de salida de Buenos Aires de los trenes de inauguración, en que se desbordó de una manera alarmante, llegando por fin hasta la vía en varios puntos, produciendose una inundación en parte de ella y la consiguiente interupción de la vía.

Habiendo soportado la vía en Diciembre último, sin sufrir consecuencias apreciables, una creciente extraordinaria más ó menos igual á la mayor conocida, la que según dicen tuvo lugar el año 1879, no se creía en un principio que podría llegar á interrumpir la interesante fiesta, pero desgraciadamente la creciente seguía aumentando de una manera extraordinaria, llegando las aguas hasta una altura nunca vista en estos valles y arrasando á su paso la mayor parte de las poblaciones y muchos miles de cabezas de hacienda, y aun según se dice, á varios pobladores que se habían dejado sorprender por la creciente.



ESTACIÓN CHOELE-CHOEL

VIAJE DE REGRESO

Los trenes se pusieron en marcha, en viaje de regreso, saliendo á las 11.12 y 11.40 p. m. el núm. 1 y 2, respectivamente, el día 1.º y á las 12.24 a. m. del día 12, el núm. 3.

El Excmo. señor Presidente de la República resolvió seguir viaje directamente desde El Puerto á esta Capital, y á este efecto se dispuso lo conveniente, preparándose un tren especial compuesto del coche presidencial, un salón y un restaurant. El señor Presidente fué acompañado por el señor White y unas veinte personas más correspondientes á la comitiva del tren núm. 1, saliendo de El Puerto á las 7.50 a. m., llegando á Plaza Constitución á las 10.55.

El resto de los invitados de los tres trenes, desearon visitar las obras del puerto militar y las obras de defensa de entrada al puerto de Bahía Blanca, para lo cual se preparó en El Puerto un tren especial compuesto de los salones comedores de los tres trenes y un coche-salón de primera clase.

Este tren salió de El Puerto á las 9.50 a. m., llegando á Punta Alta á las 11.55. Siguió inmediatamente por el ferro-

carril de Circunvalación, del Gobierno, deteniéndose en varias partes para que la comitiva visitase las obras, y volvió nuevamente á Punta Alta, donde se dividió el convoy en dos porciones, siendo cada una remolcada por una locomotora de la Empresa constructora de las obras, y se siguió en dirección á Punta Sin Nombre, término actual del Ferrocarril estratégico, y donde se halla instalada la batería núm. 3.

CAUSAS DE LAS CRECIENTES

Las crecientes que han tenido lugar en el Río Negro entre el 30 de Mayo, fecha en que llegó á su máximum en la confluencia de los ríos Limay ẏ Neuquen (afluentes que forman el Río Negro) y el 3 de Junio, cuando tenía su mayor altura en frente de Choele-Choel, obedecen á dos distintas causas. Primero, á las lluvias extraordinarias é incesantes que han caído en la región Sud de la Cordillera desde más al Norte de las fuentes del Río Neuquen, no habiendo entre los más antiguos pobladores de esas regiones recuerdo de un año igual en cuanto á lluvias; y segundo, por la elevada temperatura, anormal en este tiempo, que ha reinado, y que ha impedido que parte de esa lluvia se haya convertido en nieve, como sucede generalmente, y la que recién en forma derretida llegaría al Río Negro con los primeros calores de la primavera.

Hay datos fidedignos sobre este particular, que han proporcionado tres miembros de la Comisión de Límites que han permanecido todo el verano en esa región y recién regresan para Buenos Aires.

Ellos aseguran que durante el mes de Abril ha llovido durante 27 días y lo mismo sucedía en la parte del mes de Mayo en que permanecieron allí.

Estos datos han sido confirmados por el antiguo poblador del lago Nahuel-Huapí, señor Juan Jones, recién llegado de aquel lugar y que agrega que dicho lago, que es la fuente del Río Limay, está sumamente crecido, faltando solamente treinta centímetros para llegar al máximum conocido.

Las circunstancias apuntadas, que son bien desfavorables, no bastan, sin embargo, para propucir una creciente extraordinaria, como la que ha tenido lugar en el Río Negro últimamente, sino solamente á mantenerlo bastante crecido, pero sin desbordarse.

En este estado del río han tenido lugar á fines de Mayo lluvias torrenciales en la región del Neuquen, produciendo el desborde del mismo, y en seguida otros con igual efecto en la región del Limay, los que vinieron á cubrir parte del valle del Río Negro y, para coronar la obra, sobrevino una segunda creciente del Neuquen, más fuerte aún que la anterior, la que invadía de barranca á barranca el valle, que en frente de Choele-Choel tiene 20 kilómetros de ancho, y produjo la inundación completa del valle y la vía en los puntos más bajos y su consiguiente interrupción.

El efecto producido por esta inundación determinó la suspensión del viaje hasta Roca y la celebración del banquete inaugural allí.

Que esta creciente ha sido mucho más grande que la mayor conocida hasta hoy, lo prueban los testimonios irrecusables de varios distinguidos jefes del ejército que han presenciado la del año 1879, considerada por muchos como la mayor ha-

bida. Entre ellos puédese citar á los comandantes Oliveros Escola y Gras y al coronel Rodríguez.

Otro hecho da aún más fuerza á esta afirmación, y es, que el río nunca inundó al pueblo General Roca, como ha sucedido ahora, pues si hubiera sucedido lo contrario, no se concibe tampoco que se fundara un pueblo en un sitio que recién se ha visto inundado.

Lo mismo sucede con los relativamente valiosos establecimientos del General Díaz y Coronel Belisle, ambos jefes que llegaron al Río Negro con el ejército el año 1879, y á pesar de que han presenciado la creciente de ese año y han podido elegir el terreno más favorable, han colocado sus establecimientos casi en la misma márgen del Río, el del primero entre Chimpay y Chilforó y el del segundo entre Choele-Choel y Chimpay, donde han permanecido hasta ahora.

Lo dicho pone fuera de duda que la creciente de este año ha superado en mucho á las mayores conocidas hasta hoy, y que de consiguiente ha sido difícil de preveer en cuanto á su magnitud.



FERROCARRIL DEL SUD
OFICINAS DE LA COMISIÓN LOCAL Y DE INFORMES
CALLE CANGALLO 564, 568 Y 574

BANQUETE

en honor de la Comisión del Ferrocarril del Sur

El 21 de Junio se efectuó en el salón del Prince George's Hall, el banquete organizado por los excursionistas que asistieron á la inauguración del Ferrocarril al Neuquen, en honor del Directorio Local de dicha Empresa.

El vasto salón había sido adornado con flores é iluminado con profusión de lamparillas incandescentes.

En el centro del salón se había colocado una gran mesa en forma de herradura, preparada con verdadero lujo.

Frente al asiento de honor y en medio de las mesas laterales, se destacaban los planos del Ferrocarril al Neuquen.

Poco antes de las ocho de la noche, tomaban asiento en esa mesa más de 130 comensales; ocupaban el centro los señores:

Ministro de Inglaterra, señor W. A. C. Barrington; ingeniero, Guillermo White; H. C. Allen, Frank Henderson, C. W. Mills, C. H. Krabbé, R. Gould, G. T. Crane, Carlos Malmén y D. J. Hickey, en cuyo honor se daba la comida.

La fiesta empezó con el Himno Nacional Argentino, ejecutado á gran orquesta, que los comensales escucharon de pie y aplaudieron con entusiasmo.

Luego se sirvió la comida, durante la cual reinó la animación propia de esta clase de demostraciones.

Durante todo el transcurso de la comida la animación fué general, girando casi todas las conversaciones sobre los beneficios que al país iba á reportar la inauguración del Ferrocarril al Neuquen y la importancia que en un plazo relativamente corto estaba destinado á alcanzar este territorio. Al llegar á los postres y en el mismo momento que se aplaudía un vals del doctor Ernesto Frías, brillantemente ejecutado por la orquesta, dicho señor, como presidente de la comisión organizadora de la fiesta, ofreció la demostración en un discurso sóbrio y expresivo que puso de relieve la importancia de la obra que se celebraba.

He aquí algunas palabras del doctor Frías.

Señor Presidente y miembros de la Comisión Local:

....

...... Durante el viaje supísteis agasajarnos con todo lo agradable en confort y comodidad: no nos habeis halagado con palabras de hospitalidad cortesana, sino con frases de aliento en el presente y para el porvenir, demostrándonos la importancia que llegarán á tener esas regiones; después de haberse cambiado la flecha del indio por el arado del labriego, el humo de los campos incendiados por el salvaje, por el de la hulla incinerada para producir vapor, y la pesada carreta que, apesar de sus inmensas ruedas, parece que nunca avanza, por el tren que, rápido se desliza, anunciando que ha llegado la hora del trabajo impuesto por la civilización y el progreso.

Después de la primera conquista del desierto, llevada á cabo por el ejército argentino, al capital inglés corresponde la segunda, y con elocuente silencio nos habeis dado á comprender que esos capitales, á semejanza del agua que busca el declive, han de concurrir al llamado de esta Nación siempre que continúe encaminando su

vida, constitucional y política, á la conquista del crédito, por medio de la consolidación de la paz, que es el principio de la sabiduría de estos países de América y la preocupación primordial de todas las naciones del mundo.

. . . .

No es posible mencionar el capital inglés sin traer á la memoria que la Inglaterra ha sido siempre la que ha prestado su concurso á estos países y que los capitalistas ingleses han sido siempre liberales con sus deudores y han tenido en cuenta sus desgracias y, digo intencionalmente desgracias, porque así deben calificarse hasta nuestros mismos desaciertos, hijos de la inexperiencia, tributos de paises nuevos.

Más adelante, en un período más feliz, el doctor Frías, agregó:

— Seguro estoy, señores, que cuando aquí nos imaginàbamos que la vía que acaba de inaugurarse iba á ser utilizada para la guerra, el Directorio de Londres votaba los fondos con tranqüilo convencimiento de que no iba á ser ese su destino, sino el de conducir por ella los frutos recogidos á la sombra de la paz: el Directorio no había estudiado la cuestión internacional, pero con su sentido práctico venció, en su profecía, á la sagaz y cavilosa diplomacia.

. . . .

La República Argentina tiene una Constitución amplia y liberal, bajo cuyo amparo todos los habitantes gozan, puede decirse, de una verdadera extraterritorialidad, obteniendo aquí las mismas garantías que en sus respectivos países, para sus creencias religiosas, para su trabajo y para la emisión del pensamiento hablado ó escrito.

Ha abierto sus ríos á todas las banderas; ha suprimido los derechos de aduana para todos los materiales de construcción de ferrocarriles, telégrafos, puertos; ha garantizado los capitales con intereses elevados á fin de recompensarles sus incertidumbres y quebrantos, y ha traído á sus expensas la inmigración, sin cuyo concurso, lento hubiera sido el adelanto de la producción y del consumo.

Debido á estas circunstancias, la República Argentina ha entrado de lleno á figurar en el mercado universal, estableciendo con sus industrias ganaderas y agrícola una inesperada competencia que justamente ha alarmado á las primeras potencias productoras del mundo.

En seguida habló de la influencia del capital inglés en nuestro país, idea que coronó con un párrafo en que dijo:

Que para el capital inglés, teniendo el apoyo de la Nación, no hay campos áridos ni ríos que se desborden, porque los futuros habitantes de esos territorios, que serán transportados por los mismos trenes que nos han conducido, agregó, harán fértiles los campos «con el sudor de su frente,» y encauzarán los ríos, permitiéndoles desbordarse solamente cuando así lo disponga el dueño del terreno, abriendo ó cerrando las compuertas de los canales de riego.

Terminó su discurso brindando por el Directorio Local del Ferrocarril del Sur, por el Ministro Barrington, por el señor Allen, por la prosperidad de nuestro país y por la Reina Victoria.

Durante su discurso, el doctor Frías fué varias veces interrumpido por los aplausos, y al finalizar recibió una verdadera ovación.

La orquesta ejecutó acto contínuo el «God save the Queen».

Cuando terminó el doctor Frías, el ingeniero White hizo uso de la palabra, para agradecer la demostración en nombre del Directorio de la Compañía del Gran Ferrocarril del Sur, de su Secretario señor H. C. Allen, de la Comisión Local, del Gerente señor Henderson y el personal todo de la explotación y del Ingeniero Malmén, constructor del Ferrocarril al Neuquen, agradeciendo y aceptando la fiesta como un estímulo que los confortaría en el futuro, incitándolos á continuar observando la conducta seguida siempre y que consistía en el fiel y estricto cumplimiento de las leyes y los reglamentos que rigen á las Compañías de transportes.

Al rededor de esta mesa, dijo, veo Ministros, Senadores, Diputados, industriales, comerciantes y banqueros, representando todos los gremios, lo que me induce á proponer brin-

demos por la fraternidad y la unión de todos los gremios, que es la aspiración de mi vida, porque por este medio se engrandecerá la República Argentina, puesto que la unión conduce á la libertad.

Como era de esperarse, fué también muy aplaudido.

Terminados los brindis, la orquesta tocó « God save the Queen », que fué oido de pie por toda la concurrencia.

Respecto al *menú*, calidad de los vinos, servicio y arreglo de la mesa, basta con decir que estaba á cargo del Café de París, por consiguiente irreprochable.

Después de varios números á cargo de la orquesta, el doctor Frías usó de nuevo de la palabra para leer un decreto del Gobierno Nacional, de fecha de ayer, por el cual se cambia el nombre de la estación puerto Bahía Blanca por el de Guillermo White.

Este decreto arrancó prolongados aplausos.

Momentos después, terminada la fiesta, se formó una reunión que se prolongó hasta las once de la noche.

Los asistentes, como se verá por la lista que ofrecemos, eran, salvo pocas excepciones, todos los que asistieron á la inauguración de la línea, y por su número se podrá deducir las proporciones que ha alcanzado la gran demostración:

Ataliva Roca, Schwind, Miguel Lanús, Dr. E. Gouchón, Juan E. Serú, Dr. Santiago G. O'Farrell, Juan C. Gibson, Melchor G. Rom, D. Jijena, H. Partridge, L. I. Avellaneda, L. M. Basset, Federico Terrero, Benjamín Jiménez, Carlos Stegmann, David Simson, Antonio Martínez Rufino, Carlos Jewell, R. Varela Ortiz, Jaime F. Llavallol, J. G. Walker, Dr. Julio Peña, Dr. Miguel O'Farrell, Angel Machado, H. H. Loveday, C. Falcón, Carlos Guerrero, Dr. Morel, R. Inglis

Runciman, Félix R. Rojas, Ramón Lucero, Carlos Wibberley, J. Percy Clark, H. D. Robinson, Alberto Chovet, Roberto Paton, José Drysdale, Tomás Noceti, L. Luna, T. S. Boadle, R. A. Thurburn, Alfredo Cernadas, Manuel I. Reyna, C. H. Menzies, Nicolás Mihanovich, A. F. Büttner, Sabá Z. Hernández, Fortunato Gómez, Ramón López Lecube, Antonio Pirán, Juan F. Sarhy, Carlos E. Gómez, Tomás R. Cullen, Melitón Panelo, Juan Cano, Martín Biedma, Sixto J. Quesada, Enrique A. de Toledo, Roberto Cano, Juan M. Burgos, Carlos C. Olivera, Coronel E. Rodríguez, Pedro Rueda, Luis Beláustegui, I. J. Sánchez, G. Dominico, Alberto Schneidewind, Dr. Juan Valenzuela, Nystromer, H. Bustos Morón, R. Davenport, Ramón Videla Dorna, Pastor Senillosa, Juan Antonio Senillosa, Dr. Emilio Lamarca, Mauricio Mayer, Enrique Berduc, Tomás Santa Coloma, Dr. F. Jorge, Antonio Leloir, F. P. Bollini, J. Girondo, Adolfo Contte, Adolfo G. Villate, Alfredo Domínguez, Angel Peluffo, Dr. Evaristo Frías, Spinola y Noceti, Dr. Tristán M. Almada, Manuel J. Aguirre, Dr. Zorrilla, César Visconti Venosta, Eduardo Castex, Dr. Emilio Civit, Federico Lacroze, G. A. Cranwell, Alfredo Demarchi, Roberto F. Trillia, Juan Trillia, Julián Barraquero, E. T. Mulhall, Dawney (hijo), José A. Frías, Juan Pirovano, Mac Nally, Munro, S. Varas, F. Ambrosetti, José G. Balcarce, José M. Nevares, Santiago Brian, Florentino Barros, Juan Glasgow, Eduardo Zimmermann, E. Massaro, R. Frías, E. T. Puleston, Carlos Lockwood, Luis Valiente Noailles, José M. Trelles, Carlos Becú, Belisario Lynch.

The Banquet at St. George's Hall

From the Buenos Ayres «Standard», 22nd June 1899.

If any proof were needed to shew the importance of the Southern Railway and the esteem in which the Local Board are held, last night's banquet surely supplied it. Decked out in all the glory of floral adornments and tasteful illumination, the vast Hall presented a magnificent appearance, enhanced, we may say, by Mine Host Sempé's skillful arrangements of the tables covered with the whitest linen and glistening crystal, and laden with good things; the tables were placed in the form of an immense magnet. Up in the gallery was Furlotti's famed orchestra, whose selections we publish lower down. It was about 8 o'clock when the strains of the Argentine Hymn burst upon the Assembly, announcing in a patriotic way that the entertainment was about to begin. Dr. Ernesto Frías who presided over the feast had Don Guillermo White, Chairman of the Local Board, on his right, and the Hon. W. A. C. Barrington on his left. The menú discussed was as follows:

MENÚ

—

Potage
A la Dubarry

Hors d'oeuvre
Petite caisse Duchesse

Poisson
Anchoa Sauce Viennoise

Entrees
Jambon d'York aux Epinards
Supréme de Bécassine Périgueux

Froids
Mousse de foie gras Samaritaine
Punch Victoria

Róti
Dindonneau á la Malmaison
Salade

Légumes
Asperges Princesse Sauce Mousseline

Entremets
Glace á la Vénitienne
Gateau James Watt
Fromage
Fruits

Vins
Xérés—Chateau Yquem—Chateau Leoville—Chambertin
Roederer—Cordon Rouge

When the champagne was uncorked a call for silence was made, and Dr. Frías delivered what was unquestionably a brilliant speech.

Dr. Frias, whose voice rang out clearly through the Hall, said.

«Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Local Board:

«Only a few days have elapsed since your trains conveyed us to the Southern Territories, not merely to treat us to an excursion but also to open the Neuquen Section and shew us how you had laid your rails upon Argentine soil so as to afford parallel outlets for the country's produce to the river's mouth and the ocean. During the journey you entertained us right royally. You received us not only with courteous hospitality but with expressions of encouragement for the present and for the future, shewing us the importance which those regions must acquire in changing the Indian's arrow for the ploughshare, the smoke of burning camps fired by the

savage for that of the steam-producing coal, and the cumbrous bullock cart with its immense and seemingly immoveable wheels for the swift engine whose whistle announces the arrival of the hour of labour imposed by civilization and progress.

«After the conquest of the desert accomplished by the Argentine Army it is to British Capital that we owe the second conquest, and with eloquent silence you have proved to us that that Capital, like water seeking ite level, finds its way hither at the call of this Nation provided that the State continue its constitutional and political life on the road to the restoration of credit by means of the consolidation of peace which is the fundamental principle of wisdom in these South American countries, and the primordial preoccupation of all the nations of the earth. The present Conference at the Hague is the confirmation of that principle. Shall it be realized? We cannot say, but this we know, that the arbitration-treaties of Argentina and other nations will be the first notes in the Hymn of universal peace. I am certain, gentlemen, that when here we imagined that the Neuquen railway would be used for the purposes of warfare, the Board in London voted the funds with the calm conviction that such would not be its issue, but that it would be a channel for the fruits of labour and peace. The Board had not studied the international question then; common sense prophetically saw farther than the astuteness of diplomacy. It is not possible to mention British capital without recalling the fact that England has always lent her support to these countries and that British capitalists have always treated their debtors with liberality, remembering our misfortunes, for as such I must qualify whatever blunders we may in our inexperience have committed. Such blunders are inseparable from the progress of young countries.

«In the instructive journey we made with you, you shewed us the depth of your faith in the immense future of this country, and that if there be struggles and uncertainties inherent in every State in formation, they disappear with the red heat of the strata left first by the fight for Independence and next by the fratricidal civil wars that followed. When those strata shall have completely cooled down, we shall then be able to measure the future before us and also the future of this America, which, if it owe its discovery to Spain, owes its progress to British capital. In spite of the abandoned aspect of Neuquen, the railway which now crosses it opens a new road of progress, reminding us that when land near the

chief cities is worth half a million a league, it is necessary to look for cheaper lands to reward enterprise and encourage agriculture.

«And finally you have shewn us that for British capital supported by the State there are no barren lands, no overflowing rivers, because the future inhabitants of those territories travelling over the same rails over which we have journeyed, will have fertilised the soil with the «Sweat of their brow» and harnessed the wild current of the rivers. Has not man overcome the fury of the ocean? Has he not cut his way through regions of ice? Has he not tamed the lightning of the clouds? It is not necessary to recall these titanic efforts, which were at one time familiar to the Incas, and the Jesuits and the inhabitants of the Andine regions. Have we not in the San Roque Reservoir enclosed two hundred millions of cubic metres of water? This, gentlemen, has been the work of British capital, though, of course, without the aid of the Republic, that capital could not have conferred such benefits on the country.

«The Argentine Constitution is so liberal that all the inhabitants in the Republic enjoy the same guarantees as in their respective countries.

«The Republic has opened all its rivers to traffic, admits free of duty all material for railway construction, for telegraphs, ports, etc., further it has guaranteed a high rate of interest on capital invested to protect it from uncertainties common to all enterprises, and has brought in immigrants gratis, without whose work the progress of the country must necessarily have been slow.

«Thanks to these circumstances the Republic figures prominently in the Commercial Market, and already has alarmed the first producing countries of the world.

«The Republic has also given its quota of educated citizens to practical work characteristic of England, and we see such men as White, Brian, Villalonga, and others, presiding over Commissions to the complete satisfaction of the Directors in London.

«Gentlemen, members of the Local Commission—In fulfillment of my honourable task I ask you to accept the thanks of all present, not only for the attentions received by us but also for your faith in this country which we all love, by the zeal shown in your work just inaugurated by the President of the Republic Lieut. General Roca (who led the great expedition into the desert at the head of the Argentine army), acompanied by the Ministers, Senators and

Deputies of the Nation and by the Hon. William Barrington. H. B. M.'s Minister and the sincere friend of the Argentine Republic.

«I believe that I interpret your sentiments when I ask you to drink to the health of Mr. William White who, a native of Argentina, presides over the Commission of an English Company, not by any accident but due to his own merits; also to the health of the members of the Local Commission, of Mr. Allen the Secretary in London and of the other gentlemen our guests, symbolizing in this toast our sincerest wishes that Providence may always guide Argentina and that God may preserve the health of Her august Majesty the Queen to the benefit of all her subjects in the United Kingdom.»

Needless to say that the response of the assembly was loud and hearty. At this juncture the solemn strains of «God Save the Queen» were wafted through the Hall. Mr. White, whose voice was unfortunately somewhat faint, replied in touching terms. His whole life, he said, had been devoted to the progress of Argentina. He made a brief reference to the untimely inundations. Loud cheers greeted the conclusion of the speech, which brought the toasts to a close. Dr. Frías, a few minutes later, rose to make the pleasant announcement that the Government had that afternoon issued a decree changing the name of El Puerto Station at Bahía Blanca to Guillermo White, a graceful compliment by which General Roca evidently desired to associate himself with the entertainment and at the same time bestow on Don Guillermo the bays of immortality. The whole gathering cheered and half an hour later dispersed. It was 11 p. m. The following selections were played by the orchestra.

PROGRAMME

1.—Tannhauser	Wagner
2.—Martha	Gounod
3.—The Belle of New York......	Kerher
4.—La Bohême	Puccini
5.—Serenata Española..................	Eylemberg
6.—The Gondoliers	Sullivan
7.—María Elena	E. Frías
8.—Excelsior	Marenco
9.—Si j'etais Roi	Adam
10.—Retraite Allemande................	Eylemberg
11.—Boston N.º 9	Ramenti
12.—Miss Helyett.....................	Audran

Furlotti's Orchestra

The guests present were: —The Hon. W. A. C. Barrington H. B. M's Minister, Minister Civit, Messrs W. White, H. C. Allen, C. H. Krabbé, G. T. Crane, D. J. Hickey, F. Henderson, R. Gould, C. W. Mills, and Charles Malmén of the Great Southern Railway.

The Committee organizing the banquet consisted of Messrs:— Ernesto Frías (Chairman), Tristán Almada, L. J. Avellaneda, Cárlos I. Becú, Enrique Berduc. Fco. P. Bollini, Pedro Cernadas, José Drysdale, Juan C. Gibson, Sabá Z. Hernández, Rafael Igarzábal, Delfín Jijena, Emilio Lamarca, Belisario Lynch, Mauricio Mayer, Francisco Monasterio, Cárlos M. Morales, Santiago G. O'Farrell, Melitón Panelo, Julio Peña, R. Inglis Runciman, Ignacio Sanchez, Tomás Santa Coloma, Juan E. Serú, Federico Terrero, Rob. A. Thurburn, E. A. de Toledo, Ramón Videla Dorna. And the following gentlemen who had subscribed to the banquet were present:—General M. Campos, Dr. J. M. Rosa, Alfredo Demarchi, E. Massaro, Harry Partridge, L. Valiente Noailles, Cárlos Dawney (hijo), Roberto Cano, C. Wibberley, Adolfo G. Villate, C. H. Menzies, M. I. Reyna, Juan M. Burgos, Manuel M. Zorrilla, Juan A. Senillosa, L. Lacroix Descours, S. Varas, Antonio Martínez Rufino, Sixto J. Quesada, S. R. Davenport, Emilio Gouchon, S. Amuchastegui, L. S. Walker, H. H. Loveday. Cárlos Jewell, H. Schneidewind, Samuel Hale Pearson, A. Castaño, Cárlos C. Olivera, Adolfo Contte, Nicolás Mihanovich, S. Brian, Francisco Ambrosetti, Alex. MacNally, Tomás R. Cullen, Ramón A. López Lecube, Félix R. Rojas, Martín Biedma, José C. Balcarce, Cárlos T. Gómez, L. Luna, C. Guerrero, Melchor G. Rom, Jáime F. Lavallol, J. Percy Clarke, Juan Cano, Juan Glasgow, Andrew M. Wilson, D. Marambio Catán, Faustino Jorge, D. Nocetti, Antonio M. Piran, H. Bustos Morón, H. D. Robinson, Juan F. Sarhy, Luis Belaustegui, J. Barraquero, Rob. Paton, D. M. Reid, C. Lockwood, E. de la Serna, José M. de Nevares, M. Morel, C. Nystromer, Ataliva Roca, E T. Puleston, Florentino Barros, Angel Machado, Manuel J. Aguirre, D. M. Munro, Juan Girondo, Tomás Noceti, Alfredo L. Dominguez, César Visconti Venosta, Miguel Lanús, G. A. Cranwell, A. Hume, José A. Frías, L. M. Basset, R. L. Falcon, Juan Trillia, David Simson, Eduardo Zimmermann, J. M. Trelles, Matías E. Godoy, Angel Peluffo, B. Palacios, Ramon Lucero, E. T. Mulhall, T. Alemann, T. S. Boadle, A. F. Büttner, Juan Pirovano, Ernesto Rodríguez, P. Senillosa, Federico Lacroze, A. Chovet, Ricardo Frías, E. Kohn, Arturo Davalos.

APENDICE

Extracto de "La Nación" del 31 de Mayo de 1899

EL FERROCARRIL AL NEUQUEN

Con toda la solemnidad de un acontecimiento nacional, se celebra hoy la inaguración del Ferrocarril al Neuquen; vía que, como se sabe, fué concebida y ejecutada con un fin estratégico inmediato. Hoy, felizmente, la discreción y la serenidad diplomáticas han convertido esa línea en agente de paz, de progreso y de acercamiento internacional.

La inauguración se realiza, pues, bajo el más simpático auspicio, y una línea militar, como fué en su origen, se estrena como un factor de población y un augurio de riqueza para aquellas dilatadas y desiertas regiones, que esa vía recorre, atravesando el corazón de la Pampa para ir á detenerse al pié de los contrafuertes de la Cordillera.

Es una iniciativa del capital, que á su vez impone otras que la secunden, porque de otra manera la línea carecería de la importancia y transcendencia que implica como vía estratégica de colonización y de cultivo, llamada á arrastrar consigo los elementos de trabajo que la alimenten y que formen los centros de población para iniciar la conquista laboriosa y pacífica de la Pampa.

Esta línea, pues, impone á la Empresa que la ha construído y al Gobierno que la ha estimulado con valiosas concesiones el compromiso de que ella no sea un esfuerzo estéril, una vía tendida y abandonada al porvenir y al desarrollo expontáneo de una colonización que tardaría mucho tiempo en llegar á esas lejanas regiones, si no hubiera un impulso decidido y vigoroso que estimulase la población.

El Ferrocarril del Sud ha tomado posesión del desierto por el agente más poderoso de viabilidad, acortando la distancia de esa remota región, á horas de la zona de actividad y de cultivo, incorporándola á su radio de comunicación y relaciones, y esta es una inauguración de brillantes promesas para la riqueza y el progreso de la República que despierta ese factor de desenvolvimiento.

Esa vía es la vanguardia de la colonización de las regiones australes de la República, á las que no puede llegar la población sino por estos avances graduales que van ensanchando el cultivo del desierto, llenando paulatinamente el baldío y estableciendo una solidaridad de contacto y aproximación entre los territorios del Sur de la República.

La línea, pues, que en su origen fué un pensamiento militar, es hoy una Empresa económica, y si al principio sólo pudo aspirar á arrastrar la vida lánguida de un elemento estratégico, hoy el Gobierno y la Compañía, concurriendo dentro de sus medios y conveniencias recíprocas, deben empeñarse en rodear esa línea de los recursos y elementos que la alimenten y que ella á la vez retribuya estimulando la difusión de la población.

Es acaso teniendo en cuenta estas vistas que la Empresa ha dado tanta solemnidad á esta inauguración, á la que el Gobierno se ha asociado, presidiendo el acto el Presidente de la República en persona. Es una fie ta que carecería de significado, si sólo se tratara de una línea atrevidamente tendida en el desierto y abandonada á la acción lenta del tiempo.

Asignando esta transcendencia colonizadora á la iniciativa de este camino de hierro, es que atribuimos á su inauguración la importancia de un acontecimiento nacional, que es el carácter que le dan las fiestas con que se estrena.

Extracto de "La Prensa" del 31 de Mayo de 1899

FERROCARRIL AL NEUQUEN

La extraordinaria solemnidad de la fiesta con que se celebra la llegada de la locomotora al Neuquen, suscita el recuerdo de la impresión nacional que causó hace treinta años el arribo de los rieles á Córdoba, partiendo desde la ribera del Paraná.

Es fuertemente sugestivo el hecho de que en un país poseedor de

una red ferroviaria que desarrolla más de 16.000 kilómetros, la inauguración de una nueva línea tenga el privilegio de atraer á todo el personal del P. E., á la mayor parte del Congreso y á una masa considerable de personas privadas, cuyo número se elevaría ilimitadamente si la invitación no fuera forzosamente restringida.

¿Por qué la apertura al servicio público de los demás tramos de la red que cubre el país, no inspiró el interés del que mañana se inaugurará? La Empresa del Ferrocarril del Sud tiene en su historia páginas brillantes que rememoran jornadas valerosas, como la rematada en Bahía Blanca; pero ninguna de ellas tuvo, en el concepto de la Nación, la importancia de la del Neuquen, pues ninguna fué solemnizada como esta última.

La razón pública percibe la transcendencia de ese hecho y la Empresa tiene conciencia de ella, como lo atestigua el empeño loable que ha puesto en la celebración del acontecimiento.

Se nos ha de permitir recordar que este diario trazó hace cerca de quince años el programa de las extensiones futuras del Ferrocarril del Sud que empieza á realizarse. Cuando llegó á Bahía Blanca pronosticamos que seguiría su marcha hacia la Cordillera. Cuando diversos empresarios gestionaban concesiones para construir vías férreas interoceánicas, que arranquen del Pacífico, en Talcahuano, y terminen en el puerto de la República, *La Prensa* sostenía que esa obra sería algún día, no lejano, dominada por la Compañía del Ferrocarril del Sur, tanto por el poder de sus recursos financieros, como porque tenía ya recorrido gran parte del camino.

La línea al Neuquen, pues, es la ejecución de la primera parte del programa. La estación terminal en que mañana se celebrará la fiesta, debe ser mirada como de tránsito pues los rieles no se detendrán allí: cruzarán el gran río patagónico, pondrán en estado de explotación industrial el territorio que desde allí se extiende hacia el Occidente, se ramificarán en dirección Sur en la región andina de la Patagonia y transmontarán los Andes en demanda de los puertos del Pacífico.

La visión ó el presentimiento de esos ensanches, deben influir en el ánimo, á manera de sugestión misteriosa, predisponiéndolo para ver un suceso extraordinario en la vida del país, en la llegada de la locomotora al Neuquen.

La Empresa que realiza el esfuerzo, hondamente radicada en el país, experimentada como ninguna y conocedora de la ley de su progreso, al decidirse á salvar los límites de la provincia de Buenos

Aires é internarse en el desierto, con rumbo al Oeste, manifiesta que sustenta designios que no se circunscriben á un ramal de Bahía Blanca al Neuquen, atravesando campos despoblados é incultos, en parte inexplotables quizás: su mirada abarca un horizonte más vasto y su plan comprende expansiones que bien pudieran denominarse colosales, en fuerza de su influjo en el porvenir de la República. La prolongación al Río Negro, pues, debe ser apreciada como la toma de posesión por la industria, de un país nuevo dentro de la Nación. Es la apertura de una etapa en el progreso del desenvolvimiento económico de la República. Inaugúrase la grande obra del aprovechamiento de una porción valiosa de la fortuna con que la naturaleza dotó al país, improductiva hasta aquí por no haber sido colocada en condiciones de explotación.

Si los conquistadores españoles, fundadores de las actuales provincias argentinas, hubieran encontrado desocupados de indios los territorios del Sud, la zona del Río Negro sería hoy un opulento emporio de comercio: desde allí á la Cordillera, hasta los confines de la Patagonia austral, florecerían Estados federales prósperos, de vigorosa raza, cruzados por ferrocarriles, combinados con los puertos del Pacífico y del Atlántico, desde Bahía Blanca á Gallegos.

Esa es la etapa del progreso nacional que tardiamente se inicia hoy. A los veinte años justos de la toma de posesión por el ejército, de aquellos territorios, se apodera de ellos el más poderoso de los instrumentos con que la industria humana transforma la naturaleza primitiva. La demora nos cuesta mucho dinero perdido y, lo que es peor, el debate de la línea fronteriza y el sacrificio del arbitraje, por cuanto no habría habido litigio si las extensas comarcas, al presente baldías, estuvieran ocupadas por pueblos ricos y autónomos, eficaces vigilantes de la frontera y celosos defensores de su integridad en los consejos de los Poderes Públicos.

A la Empresa del Ferrocarril del Sud, benemérita por más de un título, le corresponde el honor y la gloria de la iniciativa y de la ejecución, con su tesoro, de aquella jornada, conciliando la legítima ambición, del capital privado de inversión, con valiosísimos intereses generales. Es justo tributarle los aplausos á que se ha hecho acreedora, en esta hora de regocijo. Ella meditaba la magna obra cuando el Estado, sin dinero y sin crédito, escogitaba arbitrios para servir sus deudas y organizar elementos bélicos en defensa de la integridad de los mismos territorios á donde hace rumbos el riel que llega al Neuquen.

Pasádas las fiestas, cumple al congreso y al gobierno meditar y expedir las medidas conducentes al aprovechamiento del ferrocarril; la compañía ha aportado su irreemplazable contingente: falta el impulso oficial y del interés privado que lleve la población á la comarca.

El Neuquen carece de caminos: es necesario abrirlos para facilitar el acceso á la estación ferroviaria. Los 300.000 $ condenados á esterilizarse en cuarteles en el Chubut y Santa Cruz, tendrían allí una proficua aplicación.

El Río Negro tiene agua para la navegación y para regar la tierra que lo bordea. Ha sonado la hora de aprovecharla en esa doble función. La via fluvial y la terrestre se complementan: por la una traficará el producto volumiuoso y de poco valor, que no tolera la alta tarifa; por la otra circulará la mercancía de consumo. De esta suerte, los medios de comunicación y de acarreo fomentarán su tráfico, enriqueciéndose mútuamente.

En aquellas zonas hay dilatadas tierras aptas para la inmigración, porque sus precios corrientes son relativamente bajos y porque su ubicación es favorable, mediante el complemento de la vía férrea. Si los póderes públicos hacen de su parte lo que les corresponde, las empresas colonizadoras surgirán por la virtud propia de los incentivos con que los negocios provechosos llaman al capital.

La locomotora penetra en regiones económicamente independientes de Buenos Aires, capital. Como decíamos antes, aquel debe ser mirado como un país nuevo, colocado fuera del sistema de las poblaciones tradicionales, procedentes de la edad colonial. Los futuros estados del sur y cordilleranos tienen sus puertos propios y sus arterias fluviales, por donde se comunicarán con el exterior y con el comercio interior. Su gran puerto de importación es Bahía Blanca, á donde llegará un día el tráfico de hombres y de mercaderías del Pacífico hasta Australia, de paso para Europa. La agricultura del Río Negro, destinada á un lisonjero porvenir, dispone del transporte barato al puerto de Patagones, que desde hace tiempo debiera gozar, pues solamente por desidia no se ha establecido una navegación regular y abundante.

Cuando la mente somete á frío exámen los problemas que envuelven el sur remoto y el occidente cordillerano y divisa la fortuna que la nación posee allí, se explica el interés vivísimo con que la opinión y las autoridades celebran la entrega al servicio público del ferrocarril del Neuquen: es en verdad un acontecimiento argen-

tino extraordinario é histórico. Así como treinta años atrás la locomotora penetraba en el interior de la República con la misión de *hacerla*, económicamente, hoy toma á su cargo la empresa de crear las futuras provincias que caben en los territorios á donde se encamina.

Concluída la fiesta inaugural y apagados los ecos de los discursos se deberá dar comienzo, sin demora, á la obra transcendental esbozada. El ferrocarril no es una prenda de lujo: es un instrumento de trabajo. La empresa lo ha construído para ganar dinero, aportado á sus arcas por la industria y el comercio, que bajo sus estímulos deben desenvolverse. Ha formulado un magno negocio argentino, pues, que entrega á la acción del gobierno y del capital: el brindis supremo del banquete debiera ser el programa de la evolución progresista que se inicia.

Con las ideas apuntadas, *La Prensa* se asocia con satisfacción patriótica á la solemnidad de mañana.

Extracto de "La Tribuna" de 31 de Mayo de 1899

« 1879 — 1899

Hace más de veinte años que una ley de la nación mandaba ocupar por fuerzas del ejército de la República la ribera del río Neuquen, desde su nacimiento en los Andes hasta su confluencia con el Río Negro en el Océano Atlántico.

Las tribus nómades existentes en el territorio entre la vieja línea de frontera y la del Río Negro, debían ser sometidas de grado ó por fuerza y arrojadas en el último caso al Sud de aquellos ríos.

Habían pasado más de diez años, y la ley de 1867 estaba por cumplirse. Se dictó entonces la ley de 1879, que autorizaba la inversión de $ 1.600.000 fuertes, con el fin de hacerla efectiva, debiendo realizarse esos recursos á favor de una subscripción pública y emisión de títulos que daban derecho á la adjudicación de las tierras en cuya posesión se entraría á medida que avanzase la línea de frontera sobre el desierto.

La ley ó las combinaciones adoptadas para llevar la línea á la márgen izquierda del Río Negro ó del Neuquen, habrían quedado por mucho tiempo sobre el papel, si un hombre no hubiese tenido la visión clarísima de su practicabilidad y la firme voluntad de

realizarlas, acabando con los misterios del desierto y con las alarmas en que vivían las poblaciones de campaña, dentro de una línea fronteriza que apenas se desprendía de los centros urbanos, á cuyas inmediaciones acampaba la barbarie, que arreaba haciendas y llevaba cautivas á familias desamparadas.

La campaña de 1879 alcanzó un éxito que el tiempo no ha hecho sino consagrar. La República Argentina tomó entonces posesión de sus fronteras naturales, trazó los límites de las tierras nacionales, fijando los de las provincias limítrofes, y dividió y organizó los territorios que la Nación gobierna directamente, hasta que hayan completado su emancipación. Pero era necesario que la civilización y el progreso concurrieran, con sus modernos y poderosos agentes, á dar á la conquista elementos sin los cuales llevarían aquellos territorios una marcha demasiado lenta y perezosa.

Llevar el ferrocarril al centro de los territorios nacionales, era una aspiración alimentada desde hace tiempo, comprendiéndose que, por ese medio se resolvían en gran parte los problemas más importantes de la vida nacional. La colonización, la industria, el comercio, la seguridad y hasta la defensa nacional, requerían el auxilio del ferrocarril.

El ferrocarril del Neuquen habría costado á la nación 15 millones de pesos oro, y habría sido, con todo, una obra aislada. Felizmente, el gobierno halló en la Empresa del Ferrocarril del Sud la eficaz cooperación que necesitaba para realizar esa grande obra, avanzando 500 kilómetros más sobre el desierto y tomando posesión efectiva de millares de leguas de tierras adaptadas á la ganadería y agricultura, que nada valían ayer, y que hoy se incorporan á la riqueza nacional.

Las necesidades de la defensa nacional precipitaron esa obra, que costará á la Nación menos de un millón de pesos oro, pagadero en diez anualidades. Felizmente, el destino del ferrocarril será otro, y en vez de servir para transportar elementos de guerra, servirá para el tráfico comercial y para fomentar la producción nacional, ligándose, como ha de ligarse, con grandes planes de colonización, desde el Atlántico hasta la cordillera.

Es justamente, por lo tanto, que se ve un acontecimiento nacional, de la más grande importancia en la inauguración del ferrocarril al Neuquen, que tiene lugar á los veinte años de haber llegado á las márgenes de ese río la expedición militar que mandaba el general Roca.

Toca al antiguo Ministro de la guerra, que concibió y ejecutó el el plan de aquella campaña, con éxito tan feliz, inaugurar hoy el ferrocarril que recorre en algunas horas la distancia que en 1879 exigió más de un mes de marcha continua al ejército que mandaba.

Al inaugurar su primera presidencia, dijo el general Roca que una de las preocupaciones que más le dominaban era la de dar impulso á las vías de comunicación. La segunda presidencia se inicia, en tal sentido, bajo los mejores auspicios, y ha de ser grande y legítima la satisfacción del estadista al presidir la inauguración del ferrocarril que complementa la conquista gloriosa de 1879.

Extracto de "El Diario" del 3 de Junio de 1899

LA LÍNEA AL NEUQUEN

El Far West Argentino

Ya está vinculada la Pampa por una arteria de circulación á la zona poblada y civilizada de la República; el desierto, como distancia inaccesible, ó poco menos, ya no existe; ha desaparecido bajo el factor más poderoso del progreso, que concreta su fórmula en la reducción del espacio ó su equivalente, la reducción del tiempo, que pone los pueblos y los intereses al habla, por la rapidez de la comunicación. La Pampa cantada por los poetas, con su horizonte mustío, su soledad inhospitalaria, acaba de incorporarse por la vía férrea á la sociabilidad, después de haber sido conquistada á la barbarie. La segunda etapa del problema pampeano está iniciada, y planteado por el ferrocarril el problema de su colonización, sin lo cual esa línea no sería más que una generosa aventura del capital inglés y un estéril esfuerzo del Gobierno, que lo ha estimulado á llevar sus rieles hasta los puntos más avanzados del territorio nacional, y esta sería una empresa grandiosa en su aliento, pero frívola en sus resultados, si á eso se limitase la obra realizada.

Trás del ferrocarril debe ir la población que cultive esos baldíos, que los remueva y movilice la riqueza que esconden, contribuyendo de este modo á fomentar el capital que ha construído esa línea y á empujar la colonización hacia uno de los rumbos más propicios para su instalación; favorable por la fecundidad que le aseguran la tierra y la irrigación fácil que brindan sus abundantes caudales de agua, y favorable por la relativa proximidad á uno de los más grandes pueblos de la república, que la ponen en fácil comunicación con el exterior y los mercados á donde la producción de esa zona tendrá que acudir buscando salida y colocación.

La línea al Neuquen plantea, pues, desde ya, el problema de llevar á las zonas que atraviesa los gérmenes de población que han de desenvolverse en colonias, en pueblos, en centros de producción y de riqueza; deparada como les está, la grandeza del far west norteamericano, con el que tiene mucha afinidad por su ubicación, su extensión y la topografía que ha servido de incentivo á la empresa de más pasmosa colonización que hayan operado los norte-americanos. En esta tarea de poblar esa dilatada y fértil llanura rebosada de caudalosas corrientes de agua, el gobierno y la empresa que han tomado esta brillante iniciativa de progreso nacional deben darse la mano; el Gobierno tiene el capital matriz, la tierra, sin la cual no habría podido realizarse esta iniciativa; la poderosa Compañía inglesa tiene el capital contante, movilizable; el que se requiere para establecer el plantel de la colonización que no se radicaría si al capital inmueble no lo secundara el de los accesorios de instalación y de útiles de trabajo.

Es esta una ocasión para ensayar un sistema de colonización que hasta ahora no se ha tentado por no haberse presentado la ocasión de una fuerte empresa capitalista como la del sud, vinculando su enorme capital á esta obra de desenvolvimiento nacional. Los ensayos de este género, ó han respondido á especulaciones transitorias ó ficticias, ó han fracasado en la escasez de medios con que se abordaron; y esto ha desacreditado, no el sistema en sí, sino las aventuras de los que sin medios, sin intereses valiosos y permanentes que los vinculasen á la colonización, la han ensayado como una frágil tentativa. La empresa del sud, imitando á las Compañías de viabilidad y transporte que en los Estados Unidos han encarrilado los territorios, está interesada más que nadie en fomentar la población de esos territorios, porque de lo contrario habría hecho un mal negocio para ella ó para el país; puesto que el capital invertido

tendría que esterilizarse durante un tiempo largo é indefinido, lo que importaría un quebranto, ó tendría que sacarle su rendimiento haciendo gravitar esa pérdida sobre el costo del transporte de las zonas pobladas que sirve esa línea, lo que sería perjudicial para la zona más floreciente de la provincia de Buenos Aires; y en este caso, el rasgo de audacia financiera habría degenerado en perjudicial exacción del tráfico.

Para evitar esta contrariedad alternativa ó para la empresa ó para la producción de la rica zona que sirve, no hay más que completar la iniciativa de la viabilidad del desierto con la de su colonización; problema que afecta no sólo al presente sino al más remoto porvenir de esa empresa, que se puede decir va en tren de conquista de los valiosos territorios nacionales que se extienden al sud y al sudoeste de la Repùblica. Cuanto más favorezca la difusión del cultivo y de la población, tanto más pronto favorecerá la solución de este vasto y colosal problema de viabilidad, que le entregará la explotación de un tráfico ilimitado, adquiriendo por estas avanzadas iniciativas un derecho de reconocimiento nacional, que la hará acreedora á toda preferencia. Pero esto ya es mirar desde muy lejos cuestiones y empresas de lejana perspectiva; por el momento, lo que la inauguración de la línea exije, es que ella sea completada y fomentada por la colonización de esa zona, entregada por la Empresa del Sud á la viabilidad que exige cultivo, población y movilidad de todos los elementos de riqueza paralizados. Lo que esos territorios cruzados por la vía reclaman, son gérmenes de población, que teniendo el medio propicio para desenvolverse, lo harán expontáneamente con poco estímulo y protección que se les dispense. Con la mitad del capital que la Compañía ha invertido en esa línea, tendrá para sembrar colonias en los puntos más favorables del trayecto, dotados de irrigación, realizada á sus espensas y contando con la cooperación oficial, en esta obra de gran progreso nacional, vinculada á los intereses de una valiosa empresa y á las conveniencias de la república.

Extracto
de "El Economista Argentino" de 3 Junio de 1899

EL GRAN FERROCARRIL DEL SUD

INAUGURACIÓN DE LA LÍNEA AL NEUQUEN

Hemos sido testigos presenciales de la colocación de la primera piedra de la primitiva estación del Ferrocarril del Sud, en cuya ceremonia, el general Mitre, entonces Presidente de la República, manifestó como una noble aspiración, el deseo de que el país llegara á tener *doce millones* de renta y á recibir *cincuenta mil* inmigrantes por año.

El eminente estadista, que en otra ocasión había declarado que la conquista de la Pampa sería obra de un siglo, opinión de que participaban entonces aun los más optimistas, ha vivido sin embargo lo bastante, sin llegar á edad muy avanzada, para ver realizadas con exceso sus patrióticas aspiraciones, viniendo además los hechos á demostrar que se han quedado y se quedarán siempre cortos los que calculen el progreso de estos paises sobre el cartabón del desarrollo que han tenido los de Europa.

En corroboración de esa creencia, tenemos las escasas proyecciones que los mismos iniciadores de la del Ferrocarril del Sud daban á la obra, limitándose su aspiración á llevar la línea hasta Chascomús, y cuando màs, hasta Dolores; es decir, á ciento veintiseis millas de Buenos Aires, no soñando siquiera que de ese tronco debían salir, antes de treinta y cinco años, prolongaciones que representarían una extensión total *¡de dos mil doscientas doce millas!*

Ninguna demostración más elocuente de la verdad de la afirmación que antes hemos hecho, de que nadie ha tenido elementos para calcular, con aproximada exactitud siquiera, lo que la República Argentina llegaría á ser al finalizar el siglo diez y nueve.

Verdad es que el grande acontecimiento, único que compararse puede al que acaba de tener lugar, por su importancia y trascendentales consecuencias, la conquista del desierto, inspiración de dos hombres de grande aliento, ha debido predisponernos á creer en nuevas maravillas, pues vino á abrir vastísimos horizontes al

espíritu de empresa, el que, ayudado por el patriótico deseo de hacer efectiva la soberanía sobre inmensos territorios, ha realizado el segundo prodigio que sirve de tema á este artículo: la prolongación hasta la confluencia de los ríos Limay y Neuquen, del ya antes Gran Ferrocarril del Sud.

Sería faltar al más elemental de los deberes, si en los momentos en que el país empieza á cosechar los resultados de tales iniciativas, no se hiciera justicia á los que han puesto sus capitales y energías al servicio de la idea y á los que en su carácter de hombres públicos han cooperado á su realización.

¡Honor á los unos y á los otros!

La prolongación al Neuquen, que no ofrece, ni ofrecerá por algún tiempo, probabilidades de lucro, coloca á la Empresa que la ha ejecutado en condiciones especiales.

Bien sabido es que ella resolvió su construcción, más que por propia conveniencia, por satisfacer á los deseos del anterior gobierno, al que mucho preocuparon los medios de defender la integridad del territorio; como está en la conciencia de todos, que sin las exigencias de la estrategia, esa prolongación habría sido muy probablemente hecha en otra dirección.

Ha habido pues desinterés y patriotismo de parte de todos los que en ese importante asunto han intervenido; lo que, repetimos, coloca á la referida Empresa en excepcionales condiciones.

Verdad es que ni esa ni otras Compañías de Ferrocarriles, de los construídos en el país, pueden considerarse como extranjeras.

Algunas de ellas, y muy especialmente la de que se trata, han sido iniciadas y llevadas á cabo por antiguos residentes ingleses, vinculados al país por los lazos de la familia y por valiosos intereses los que han entregado en muchos casos el manejo de estos y la dirección de aquellas, á sus hijos, nacidos en el país, ó á argentinos que han merecido su confianza.

El gran Ferrocarril del Sud, en el que han comprometido esas personas sus fortunas y cuya alta dirección está á cargo de una de ellas que puede considerarse anglo-argentina, y cuyo inmediato control desempeña con acierto un notable ingeniero del país, ha tomado con el hecho carta de ciudadanía, y no puede ser considerado como un negocio extranjero.

El capital no tiene, además, patria ni religión; y el que nuestros elementos de riqueza se incorpora, debe merecernos siempre protección.

Una Empresa que ha conseguido reunir cerca de cien millones de pesos oro, para destinarlos á la construcción de una vastísima red de líneas férreas, que han venido á facilitar la población y el cultivo de la provincia de Buenos Aires, y que en momentos verdaderamente angustiosos, buscó nuevos recursos para llevar á cabo una prolongación que hacía posible el rápido transporte de elementos de defensa á la amenazada frontera nacional, puede y debe considerarse como benemérita de la patria.

From the Buenos Ayres "Standard" 1st June 1899

THE NEUQUEN RAILWAY INAUGURATION

In the history of railway enterprise in the Plate the inauguration of the Neuquen Line will stand out as an event unparalleled in splendour, and unsurpassed, we may say, in official importance — if we may so designate the imposing presence of authority. The whole machinery of State appears to have been brought to a standstill in order to enable our magistrates and magnates to transport themselves 800 miles from Buenos Ayres to open the most distant and the least important—for the moment—section of the Southern Railway. No less than three long trains were required yesterday to convey the invited guests to the inauguration and from this bare circumstance our readers may form an idea of the scale on which the opening ceremony has been planned. There is a certain vastness about the Great Southern Railway Company, in their enterprise, in their capital, in their very notions of entertainment. The fact is, as Mr. Parish recently pointed out in a brilliant speech, that the Company are identified with the progress and development of the country. Their rails cover a distance of 2200 miles, and are, as it were, the arteries of the province of Buenos Ayres. In 1865, when the original line was opened, the distance was 72 miles. Ten years later the figure was 203. In 1885, it was 640. In 1891, 934. To-day it is over 2000, and the Company have sunk 24 millions sterling in an enterprise that would do credit to the most advanced nation in the world. When the rails reached

Bahia Blanca, it was thought that the Company would pause for at least a generation in their policy of extension, for it was thought and with reason, that the production of the province would not be able to keep pace with the growth of the concern. And, indeed, but for the Chilian war-scare, the Neuquen extension would not have been built for another 20 years. The idea of constructing a railway to the Andine frontier germinated in the fertile brain of General Roca. He seems to have said to himself: «In the event of » war such a line would give us victory; if peace be preserved we » shall awaken a distant territory and prepare the way for the » growth and prosperity of the South.» It was his good luck to enlist the sympathy and support of the Great Southern Railway Company. In a few weeks the capital was subcribed and the first sod turned, in a few months the first section was completed, and to-day we assist at the formal opening of the Line.

The inauguration of the Neuquen railway means much more than the mere completion of a section of the Southern Railway. It signifies the first practical step in General Roca's policy of rousing the south, and hence no doubt the importance which the Government and the Company are giving to the inauguration. The area of the South is close on four times that of Great Britain and Ireland, and twice that of France or Germany. It is no small stretch of territory. It has been blessed by Nature with all that is necessary for the support of man: a mild climate, a fertile soil, beautiful valleys, extensive plains, deep rivers and vast woodlands, and a splendid stretch of seaboard indented with safe and roomy harbours. Forty millions of men could live happily in the South. The population in all is under one hundred thousand. It has been reserved for a statesman of General Roca's calibre to undertake the task of giving life to the immense territory of the South. But for him there would be no railway in the Neuquen, nor indeed would the Government devote the slightest attention to the requirements of the scattered bands of plucky pioneers who have settled along the coast. A wonderful change however is coming over things in the Plate. Common-sense has begun to preside over the councils of the State, and to-day there is more importance attached to the inauguration of a railway than to political intrigues or provincial revolutions.

From the "Times of Argentine" 4th June 1899

THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEUQUEN RAILWAY

The visitors to the inauguration of the Neuquen extension have now returned from their long journey and although they were not able to reach the terminus owing to the inundation they are loud in their praise of the treatment received at the hands of the officers of the Great Southern Railway, and loud also in their praise of the work undertaken and carried out by that powerful and progressive Company. It is fully recognized that the line will open to traffic an enormous area of land which would otherwise remain a wilderness, and provided the Government direct immigration to the Pampa there is no reason why that region should not become a productive wheat field. It is believed that the Railway will give every facility to foster colonization, and provided the shipping arrangements at Bahía Blanca are perfected, there is absolutely no reason why agriculturists should not prefer the Pampa to Santa Fé. The situation is unique for immigrants from the northern parts of Europe, while the fact that they will be free from the drawbacks of working under Provincial Governments should certainly be an inducement to colonists. The Southern Railway may be trusted to supply the demand consequent upon increased production, and what today is only a temporary line may soon grow into a powerful extension distributing facilities for rapid communication as labour calls for such facilities. The Pampa and the valley of the River Negro, when the necessary canalization and engineering works are carried out to mitigate the effects of periodical inundations, are likely to come to the fore as the most productive regions in Argentina, and we understand that such works will not be costly and are likely to be undertaken as the district progresses. The inauguration of the Neuquen railway is therefore likely to mark a period of the utmost importance in Argentine productive history. What must be taken in hand without delay are the necessary facilities for heavy shipments at Bahía Blanca.

From the "Review of the River Plate", 9th June 1899

TWENTY YEARS AFTER

To all the men of middle life who were present, or who have watched with interest the account of the inauguration of the Neuquen extension, the occasion must have been one alluring to retrospect; and for none could the retrospect be more pregnant of matter for thought than for the Argentine soldier who holds the rank of President of his native country.

Retrospect is not always pleasant: indeed, as a rule, it is saddening. But there are occasions in the life of some when retrospect affords ground for legitimate pride. We can hardly fancy an occasion more full of just reason for self-gratification than the inauguration of the Neuquen extension for General Roca. Twenty years ago the Argentine Republic, which then counted less than a score of years existence, had hardly realized the greatness of its heritage. Bahia Blanca, founded in 1828, fifty years earlier, was the farthest south that the Buenos Ayrean settlements had ventured; for Patagones, at the mouth of the Rio Negro, was the creation of Spaniards more than a hundred years ago, and for its occupation the republic could claim no credit. Chili, with a smaller stretch of Patagonian territory, had yet done more to take possession, for she had founded Punta Arenas as far back as 1851, while Ushuaia, the capital of the extreme Argentine South, was not founded twenty years ago.

General Roca is a son of the Argentine north, almost a son of the tropics. But there has never been present in his policy the lassitude which is supposed to be inherited by the natives of the tropics; and he has shown himself to possess a large endowment of that stubbornness which the Anglo-Saxon is apt to claim as his peculiar birthright. Twenty years ago he saw, with a statesmanship as far seeing as it is uncommon, that if Argentina did not enter on her inheritance in Patagonia, it might one day be wrested from her. It was not that the district had then any great value. Even now the population is very sparse, and its wealth but small; in 1879 it was all but valueless. It was far more accessible to the Chilian than to the Argentine; and bands of Chilian Indians had now and again swept across it, spreading terror where they passed.

Forty five years earlier Darwin had found General Rosas encamped on the Rio Colorado, at the head of an expedition which the government of Buenos Ayres had sent out to cope with the marauders; and those forty five years had seen little alteration for the better. But General Roca's expedition of twenty years ago effected a miraculous change. Indian raids became a thing of the past when the forts were founded; and under the shelter of these forts the peaceful settler found courage to encamp, while the savage found that contact with civilization was not altogether an evil thing. All this became possible twenty years ago, when General Roca returned to Buenos Ayres to assume the President's chair; and even then he might look back on his achievement with justifiable pride.

But twenty years ago the work of General Roca, though it was well begun, was but half done. The richest parts of the old territory which had been newly won, the valleys of the Neuquen and the Limay, nay even the valley of the Rio Negro itself, were still far more accessible to the Chilian than to the Argentine; and ever as the boundary question arose, the phantom of a Chilian occupation of Neuquen arose with it. General Roca had done what he could to annihilate space by improving the navigation of the Rio Negro; but the work was a difficult and in many ways an unremunerative one, and in the hands of slack officials it was neglected and practically abandoned. In 1886, when General Roca left office, the Southern Railway had not long been in through communication with Bahía Blanca: its extension so far had involved the raising of the large capital of £ 5.000.000, and the possibility of its pushing beyond that point would have seemed but the dream of a visionary.

There was apparently but one Argentine statesman who was visionary enough to keep it in view. The soldier who had first extended his country's sway in a practical shape did not rest until he had placed the Neuquen wilds within as easy communication with Buenos Ayres as the old civilizations of Tucuman and Jujuy.

With the inauguration of the Neuquen railway on June 1st, 1899, the military part of General Roca's achievement is complete. Twenty years after he first raised the Argentine flag on the upper reaches of the Rio Negro, he sees that remote district united with the Capital of the country more than 800 miles away. Could the soldier find a more legitimate ground for self-congratulation?

But fortunately for all of us, fortunately for the destinies of Argentina and Chili, the victory of peace bids fair to be no less renowned than that of war. The Neuquen extension—there is no use blinking the fact — was intended to be a strategical railway: it was the offspring of the jealousy between the two republics which has more than once seemed as if it must find its expression in war. Had war broken out, the lack of means of communication with Neuquen might have been matter for bitter regret to the Argentine.

The war-cloud has passed away; and the victory of peace shines all the brighter. The land through which the Neuquen extension steadily pushes its way for 350 miles west of Bahia Blanca seems to the eye of the casual observer little more than a desert where it is not a swamp. But then the casual observer is completely at a loss to understand, as he looks over the bleak plain in the south of this province, whence the Southern Railway draws its traffic. It may be some time before the Rio Negro valley yields much traffic to the company, but most of those who were present at its opening will see that day. And there can be little doubt that eventually it will form a bond of union between the two countries in whose conflict it was to have been a useful weapon.

From the Buenos Ayres "Herald" 4th June 1899

OPENING OF THE NEUQUEN EXTENSION

On the 14th of December 1865 the line to Chascomus, 75 miles in length, was opened to the public service. At tbe general meeting of the shareholders held in London after this event, there was present a young man from Buenos Ayres who was connected with the Company, Mr. Frank Parish, who made a speech in which he said it was probable that the company would find it to its advantage to extend that line from Altamirano across the Salado River. The Chairman of the Board replied that they were very glad to hear from Mr. Parish, especially his sanguine views of the growth of country, but he wished to assure the shareholders that it was not

the policy of the Board to extend the line, and the company «Would » have to stand or fall on the results of the line as it then stood. »

At the next general meeting of the shareholders the Board brought forward a proposition to make the extension referred to by Mr. Parish, and from that day to this the company has never found a place where it could stop, and it is a question whether such a time will ever come; but as all things human have an end, it is a matter of curiosity to see where the place will be at which this ever-moving company will pause.

At various epochs in the history of the Company we have heard the Chairman say that the time had at last come when the company could take a rest from extensions, and presently greater enterprizes than ever have been set on foot. Such a time occurred when the line was opened to Bahia Blanca from Azul; but, as has been seen, the second line by way of Tres Arroyos followed hard after, and now we have the third line via Guamini, with a fourth by way of Pringles on the eve of construction.

It is an historical and financial fact that the Company has invested in the Country the entire earnings of the line and even more, increasing the capital faster than the line has been able to earn it; so that the Company has taken not a dollar from the Country since its organization, but has invested even a greater sum than it has earned. The history of this Company is the history of the development of the Country, for its growth has been the growth of the Country and it is literally true that this Company has been the strongest bulwark of the credit of the nation in troublesome times; and when the perspective is so far removed as to bring into focus all the facts of the case, no figure will stand out more prominently than that of Frank Parish, whose statue should be placed in the centre of Plaza Constitucion, facing the Station and the great South country, for he has done a wonderful life's work, as much for Argentina as for the Southern Railway.

When the terminus of the line was at Azul there came a crisis in the life of the Company, when a less skilful man than Mr. Parish aided by Mr. Barker, would have failed to meet the issue and save the Company from the fate which threatened it; and not only so, but from the crisis and threatened defeat to snatch such a victory as was embodied in the extensions on a grand scale which then began and have not yet stopped. Since that time there has never been a question as to any possible rival for the franchise of this

company. From that time may be marked the change in the attitude of the Company towards the public. Since then the policy of the management here and in London has been candidly to meet the public on any question of interest or issue, and give a hearing to all, and concessions to all reasonable demands or suggestions. Since that time it has been the leader in all railway interest, and it now stands without a rival in public consideration, it being the ambition of all others to come as near as possible to the example of the Southern Railway.

The following table will show the rate at which the Company has been developed, the dates of the opening of the various sections, the amount of the capital at that time, and the distance from this city, and the number of miles in operation; a record without a parallel on this continent — all the more so if we regard it not as a consolidation but the work of a single Company:

Section.	*Capital.*		*Date of Opening.*	*Miles.*
Buenos Aires to Jeppener.	— £	750.000	14 Aug., 1865.	48
Jeppener to Altamirano.	— »	750.000	14 Dec., 1865.	6 1/2
Altamirano to Chascomus.	— »	750.009	14 Dec., 1865.	16
Chascomus to Dolores.	— »	1.826.900	10 Nov,, 1874.	56
Dolores to Maipú.	— »	2.770.135	7 Dec., 1880.	42 1/2
Maipú to Ayacucho.	— »	2,770.135	7 Dec., 1880.	38 1/2
Ayacucho to Tandil.	— »	4,524.296	19 Aug., 1883.	39
Tandil to Juarez.	— »	6,350.000	8 May., 1885.	53
Juarez to Tres Arroyos.	— »	7,000.000	2 April, 1886.	55 1/2
Tres Arroyos to Bahia Blanca.	— »	15,532.930	2 Dec., 1891.	119
Altamirano to Ranchos.	— »	1,197.350	1 Mar., 1871.	15
Ranchos to Gral. Belgrano,	— »	1,197.350	19 May., 1871.	20
General Belgrano to Las Flores.	— »	1,284.600	1 July., 1872.	40
Las Flores to Azul.	— »	2,402.389	8 Sept., 1876.	68
Azul to Olavarria.	— »	4,524.296	15 Mar., 1883.	27
Olavarria to Gral. La Madrid.	— »	4,524.296	1 Oct., 1883.	58
Gral. La Madrid to Bahia Blanca.	— »	5,124,296	7 May., 1884.	162
Maipú to Mar del Plata	— »	7,000,000	26 Sept., 1886.	80
Hinojo to Sierras Bayas	— »	8,000.000	16 July, 1887.	3 1/2
Hinojo to Sierra Chica	— »	8,000.000	16 July, 1887.	6 1/4

Section.		*Capital*	*Date of Opening.*	*Miles.*
Hinojo to Sierra Chica prolongation.	— »	19,282.930	23 July, 1888.	4
Branch to Boca	— »	8,500.000	23 July, 1898.	4
Branch to Mercado Central de Frutos.	— »	17,032.930	2 Feb., 1896.	1 1/2
Tandil to Los Leones.	— »	15,532.930	May., 1892.	4
Olavarria to San Jacinto	— »	15,532.930	21 Aug., 1893.	7 3/4
Olavarria to San Nicolás.	— »	15,532.930	21 Aug., 1893.	2 3/4
Olavarria to Loma Negra.	— »	15,532.930	21 Aug., 1893.	4 1/4
Merlo to Lobos.	- »	11,000.000	21 July, 1890.	39 3/4
Lobos to Saladillo	— »	11,000.000	21 July, 1890.	54 1/4
Saladillo to Alvear.	— »	17,032.930	1 Nov., 1897.	30
Temperley to Cañuelas	— »	11,000.000	12 Mar., 1890.	29
Cañuelas to Las Flores	- »	15,532.930	1 May., 1892.	71
Las Flores to Tandil.	— »	15,532.930	1 Aug., 1891	94
Ayacucho to Balcarce.	— »	15,532.930	24 Feb., 1892.	54 1/2
Balcarce to Quequen.	— »	15,532.930	1 Aug., 1892.	65
Quequen to Necochea.	-- »	15,352.940	1 Aug., 1892.	1
Cañuelas to Lobos.	— »	15,532.930	1 Aug., 1892.	20 3/4
Lobos to Navarro.	— »	19,282.930	1 Jan., 1898.	14 3/4
Lobos to 25 de Mayo.	— »	19,282.930	10 Jan., 1898.	67
25 de Mayo to San Carlos de Bolivar.	— »	19,282.930	27 July, 1898.	77
San Carlos de Bolivar to Guaminí.	— »	19,282,930	27 July, 1898.	96
Guaminí to Saavedra.	— »	19,282,930	27 July, 1898.	83
El Puerto to Rio Colorado.	— »	17,032,930	1 Oct, 1897.	106 1/4
Rio Colorado to Choele Choel.	- »	19,282.930	1 July, 1898.	110 3/4
Choele Choel to Neuquen.	— »	21,012.230	1 June, 1899.	133
Grunbein to Puerto Belgrano.	— »	19,282.939	1 July, 1898.	13
Ensenada Section.	— »	19,282.939	1 July, 1898.	74

Total miles......... 2,212

From the above it will be seen that the first actual stopping place was Chascomus, 72 miles, and the last opened on the first of June was Neuquen, 2212 miles. The first capital was £ 750,000 and the present £ 21,012,230. But capital and mileage will not convey an

idea of the extent of the operations of this company. In has 232 locomotives, 63 sleeping-coaches, 233 passenger-coaches with 215 vans, 8494 freight cars, 149 service waggons. It employs 9214 men, of which number 1810 are on construction, and the pay roll is £ 73,000 per month, or about $ 800,000 in our paper money.

Its present organization consists of a Board of Directors in London of which Mr. Frank Parish is President; Messrs Edward Ashworth, Geo. W. Drabble, John Fair, R. J. Neild, David Shennan, Directors; Mr. H. C. Allen, Secretary; Consulting Engineers, Messrs. Livesey Son & Henderson; General Manager, Mr. Frank Henderson; Local Directors, Messrs. Wm. White, George T. Crane, Charles H. Krabbé; Mr. D. J. Hickey, Secretary; Traffic Superintendent, Mr. Thomas Gregory; Storekeeper, Mr. J. Ballantyne; Locomotive Superintendent, Mr. R. Gould; Chief Resident Engineer, Mr. C. W. Mills; Accountant, Mr. O. J. Beck.

The inauguration of the Neuquen extension was fixed for the first of June, the occasion being celebrated with elaborate preparations and with a lavishness of hospitality never attempted by any other railway in South America, surpassing even the memorable celebration of the opening of the first line to Bahia Blanca in 1884; the President of the Republic General Roca, his Cabinet, Senators and Deputies in the National Congress, diplomatic representatives, bankers, and leading men of the city being guests of the company.

Three finer trains never left the city than those that steamed out of Constitucion on the morning of the 31st of May for Neuquen. The locomotives were decorated with bunting and bore the legend — « Inauguration of the Neuquen extension, June 1899. » The journey was made without incident to Bahia Blanca. At various points on the route towns were gay with bunting, and at some of the stations the schoolchildren had assembled to greet the President as he passed. On the afternoon of the day of departure ominous telegrams reached the excursionists of great floods in the Rio Negro valley, which threatened to interrupt communication with the terminus. Knowing that Engineers Malmen and Knox Little were on the ground, the excursionists hoped, however, that matters would not turn out so bad as was feared.

The journey was continued as far as Choele-Choel, where it was known that the line was cut at the next station and that there was no hope of reaching General Roca, where preparations had been

made for the banquet. The trains proceeded to Chimpay, where the line was cut and a return became necessary. Indeed the last of the three trains barely got back before a new cut was made in the line between the trains and Choele-Choel. It was decided to go as far as Fortin Uno, on the Colorado, and do the best possible under the circumstances. A letter from Mr. Parish was read, regretting his inability to be present on the occasion, offering his congratulations and saying that the establishment of direct communication by rail between two neighbouring nations effected by the new extension would doubtless be the precursor of a new era of friendship between the peoples of each. Mr. Parish also sent a telegram addressed to President Roca, which was also read.

The President's address and that of Mr. White were handed round to those in the trains. Then followed speeches by Dr. Frías, Dr. Fresco and Dr. O'Farrell. The band played the Argentine hymn and «God save the Queen.» The guests united in an address of thanks to their hosts, and the officers of the Company in this city and in London were not forgotten. Many toasts followed and everybody was in good temper. Mr. Krabbé, on behalf of the Company, presented the guests with silver medals in memory of the event, a few of the principal official guests and the chief officers of the Company receiving gold medals. It was a finely planned celebration of a great event and was marred solely by the greatest flood ever known to have occurred in the Rio Negro valley. A regiment of waiters, great quantities of supplies, and a profusely decorated banqueting hall were all ready waiting at General Roca, but were cut off from the guests by the surging floods.

On the second of June the several trains arrived at Bahía Blanca. The President, Minister of War and some twenty others returned at once to Buenos Ayres; but the party with these exceptions proceeded to visit the new military Port Belgrano, the dock and batteries, returning to the port of Bahía Blanca after dark, the entire party of 200 persons having been kept waiting on the train while Minister Civit, with the greatest lack of consideration, made a leisurely visit to Mr. Luiggi. The three trains proceeded at night for this city, the last arriving at 7 p. m. having been detained by heavy winds. Thus ended an excursion which had been arranged with a completeness never attempted in the country, and which was interrupted by such floods as surpass all record. About 150 persons sent on to Fortin Roca to arrange for tbe banquet are there now

cut off by the waters. The banquet hall was finished, furnished and decorated, without regard to labour or expense. It has a complete electric light installation, by which it may be inferred what the affair would have been had it come off as intended. As it was, the party were congenial and the greatest good feeling marked the excursion. The officers of the Railway without exception were tireless in attending to the comfort and wishes of their guests, all of whom will long remember with pleasure the excursion.

From the Review of the River Plate 9th June 1899

THE OPENING OF THE NEUQUEN EXTENSION

In December 1897 we gave a brief account of a visit to this line, which was then completed for almost two-thirds of the way, to Choele-Choel. Last week we had the pleasure—and the disappointment—of joining the large party which accompanied the President on his expedition to Roca, for the purpose of inaugurating the now completed line, and of finding that owing to a most unusual combination of adverse circumstances, it was impossible to proceed farther than Chimpay, the station beyond Choele-Choel. It was the more disappointing to all because we understand that the scenery farther up the Río Negro is more interesting, and the whole country more attractive than the part which was actually traversed by the presidential party on the 31st of May and the 1st of June.

Nevertheless, the party who were thus disappointed were unanimous in agreeing that no blame attached to the Railway Company, nor to any of its officials, that the ocurrence, unfortunate as it was, did not indicate any fatal defect in the line, and that the President was fully justified in congratulating the Company and the country on the labours of the past three years. The line has been built in a valley that is subject to occasional inundation, and it has been built as economically as possible consistently with ordinary sound engineering. It has therefore taken in most cases the straightest course; and in determining the levels the constructors have been guided by the most precise information attainable in a country where everything has up till now been in the traditional stage. It is known for a certainty that the last flood whose dimensions re-

sembled those of last week's inundation was that of 1879, and that the level attained on the present occasion has been considerably higher than that of the earlier inundation. Moreover, although inundations and «washouts» have been expected, and allowed for in the calculations of the Railway Company, they were hardly to be expected at this season of the year. Both the Limay and the Neuquen drain large areas of country which is snow-clad for a great part of the year; and the ordinary floods are due to the melting of these snows in early, or even in comparatively late summer. But that which may almost be expected in December is not likely to occur in June; and it was natural that the end of May or the beginning of June should be regarded as a very suitable season for the inauguration of the line from the point of view of physical conditions.

But the season, as we all know, has been an exceptional and most detestable one so far. We have not had more than two or three really cold days, with frost at night. In the city of Buenos Ayres the result of this weather has been clearly seen. Under ordinary conditions the yellow fever which broke out sporadically in February and March would have died out at latest in April; but the damp and the warmth have caused it to hang about until now. Probably this unusual mildness has been felt in the Neuquen territory also, and the snows which ought to have fallen by this time, and covered the ground with its winter mantle, not to be dissolved until November or December, have been converted into sheets of rain. Moreover, these rains have been extremely heavy; so that when the Limay came down in flood and then slackened off, the Neuquen took up the tale, and the unfortunate inhabitants of the valley have been subjected to one *creciente* after another, each more serious and alarming than the previous one. Hence, as we have said, the disaster must be looked upon as exceptional from the railway point of view: in certainly will be regarded as exceptional by the inhabitants of the *ranchos* and the *estancias* which were drowned out last week, after enjoying immunity for twenty years.

But enough has been said regarding the unfortunate side of the business. What is of much greater importance is the future of the line, and of the country through which it passes. Of course, from the point of view of the Southern Railway, the line need not pay its way for a very considerable time, and may yet be a fair investment for them: for the directors of that Company have been

accustomed to look a long way ahead, as a good many people thought when the monstrous station was built at Plaza Constitucion, to be found too small after fifteen years or so. Yet the Southern Railway is not likely to be remiss in stimulating traffic where this can be done; and the whole course of commerce on the Rio Negro will undoubtedly be altered. Some superior persons will be apt to smile when they read of the trade of the Rio Negro; and it is true that cargo which is carried on steamers drawing two or three feet of water, and loading say twenty tons, cannot be expected to assume great dimensions in the eyes of the railway. Nor is it probable that the construction of the railway will be a deathblow to Patagones: the lower part of the valley will still find its natural outlet on the coast, and the whole valley will probably share in the stimulus imparted by the intrusion of the railway. Moreover, when the bridge is completed, and Neuquen territory is entered, more trade still may be expected to spring up; for that part of the country, which has hitherto been more accesible from the west than from the east, is having its natural outlet closed by the perverse fiscal policy of Chili, and the artificial outlet provided by the railway will no doubt make itself felt.

One other point may be touched on before we arrive at a description of last week's excursion—the stupendous progress and magnitude of the Southern Railway. This is a matter to which people in the Argentine Republic have hardly directed their attention. Yet the figures involved are colossal. The Company has now 2216 miles of road, and its capital is £ 21,012,930, while its traffic earnings for the year completed last June were over £ 1.500,000, the number of miles open then being 1469. The cost of the road, as represented by the capital, is thus about £ 10.000 per mile, and its earnings are roughly £ 1000 per mile. Probably there will be a redution in the traffic receipts per mile this year, on account of the addition of the 350 miles which the Neuquen extension represents, although the total earnings show an enormous increase of over £ 250,000. Nor should it be forgotten that the Company is making huge extensions in other directions at the same time as it is bridging the desert and the flood. The Lobos extension to Guamini, all of which was opened last year, has a length of over 300 miles; and the 74 miles of the Ensenada Railway have also been added during the last year to the Company's stake in the country.

It will be said that the Company has not made these vast invest-

ments of capital without very good reason, that it has, as some of our colleagues aver, been draining the country of its hardearned produce, the profit on hich wis eaten up by freights; and it will be farther averred that the existence of so huge a Company is in a way a menace to the nation. To which we have only to reply, that the Southern Railway has undoubtedly made a very good thing out of the Argentine Republic: there is really no need for its shareholders to speak of the « Sacrifice» which their capital has made; but it has not, on the whole, made any larger profits than a company whose capital is risked in a foreign land, and under alien laws, is entitled to expect. Wherein it presents a contrast to the other English companies here is that they have oftentimes been unable to make a decent profit. The result is that the Southern Railway's shares have always stood at a figure which was a sort of certificate of character to the Argentine Republic in its most depressed days while the quotations of the stocks of other railways were available to the investor in Argentine bonds who wished to justify himself in washing his hands of the whole country. And as for the Company's being a menace to the nation — well, the experience of companies in this country has been such that one is apt to say, the stronger the company, the better its chance of getting fair play from official persons who sometimes harass the life out of weaker institutions. Of course, the days when this was done are past. There is to be no more girding at the extortions of foreign capital. The capitalist and the immigrant are both to find this country an earthly paradise. We believe it is one of Sir Walter Scott's characters who expresses our attitude of mind on the subject — «That » may be, and that may not be.»

But it is dry work arguing, when one has a story to tell. We all set out from Plaza Constitución on the very misty morning of May 31st, and the aspect of the camps was not cheering as we went. On the lower levels they seemed to be all but drowned out. There is not much of interest in the landscape, as one speeds along in a special train which is by no means special in its speed: the only break to the monotony of the dead level is that of the Sierra Chica; and there, there is a prison. Olavarria may be noted as the only place which was loyal enough to turn out with a band, and to spend itself on that most objectionable of all pastimes, setting off fireworks by daylight. All the picturesque part of the line was lost on us, for we ran through Curumalan and Pigüe at night, arriving

in Bahía Blanca at midnight, after a journey of over 400 miles, singularly free from dust. Of this we were blissfully unconscious, as also of the unencouraging character of the first part of the new extension, shortly after leaving Bahía Blanca. We had crossed the Colorado, and were coasting along its banks by the time the sun came up; but by the time we reached Pichi Mahuida, most of the travellers had begun to take an interest in the scenery, and they were glad to stretch their legs when we stopped to take in water for Benjamin Zorrilla, the station on the ridge of the watershed. The Colorado showed no signs of flood, being rather low, if anything, and the rude raft which is moored by ropes at the ford swung lazily in a sluggish current. It flows between well defined banks, and looks as if inundation would be a difficult art for it to acquire. The country around is undulating, somewhat sandy and shingly in appearance; and the only thing that appears to grow is a sort of scrub, lean and thorny. Yet there must be some kind of feeding, unless these stray herds of cattle and flocks of sheep have been brought down here by the railway to cast a glamour over our eyes. Of wild life there is almost none, Perhaps the ground animals find the air too fresh and are waiting for the sun to come out: if so, they will have to wait some time, for we do not get a glimpse of it all day, and the wind bites shrewdly.

Over the ridge we go, and down into the valley of the Rio Negro, through an occasional cutting of what looks like sandstone. The stone which crops up in the bed of the Colorado seemed to be a blue limestone or, possibly, granite. We have heard mutterings by this time regarding the state of the line farther on; but we have paid little or no attention, and we are filled with admiration for the Río Negro when we find it a river of two or three miles wide, with islands in the distance which remind us somewhat of the Paraná islands, although all the vegetation has a very wintry look. On the side where we are there is a bank of bluffs some hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high; but the river is so wide, or the intervening island of Choele-Choel is so broad, that the bluffs on the other side are invisible. Our respect for the Rio Negro changes into other feelings as we slowly realize that the long line of posts half a mile out in the water are telegraph posts, which in favourable circumstances stand on dry land; and the railway officials begin to pull long faces, as if it was only now they knew it would be impossible to go beyond Chimpay, and somewhat uncer-

tain whether we should be able to go so far. We halt at Choele-Choel, which is composed of a wooden hut, two benches, a small table, and an Argentine flag with the colours placed vertically instead of horizontally. The inhabitant is apparently a military gentleman, with a scarlet-lined cloak, which looks comfortable. But there is a ticket intimating the sale of cigars and cigarettes according to the law, from which we infer that there must be other inhabitants, and possibly some one to administer the law. We are informed however that the town of Choele-Choel lies several miles to the south east, and that it is quite a creditable place; which we are willing to believe, especially as the station bears witness to the fact that enterprising advertisers from Buenos Ayres expect to find some custom here.

The view along the line is not cheering. Not only is the water close up to the line on the river side, but it appears to have got beyond the line, and to be settling down on it, with a fixed determination to sweep it away. However, we decide to go on to the next station if practicable, and in spite of slowly rising waters, and culverts which make one feel shaky, though *they* probably are not, we reach Chimpay. Here the three trains, which have hitherto kept bowing distance from one another, are drawn up side by side. I believe that while we finished breakfast at this place the line was formally declared open by the President of the Republic. I am bound to say that I did not see any effects of such a declaration: on the contrary, it looked rather as if the line were to be closed, with a declaration or without one. The water was evidently creeping up steadily. During the short time we were at Chimpay it rose and began to flow over the sleepers and underneath the rails on to the track. All the houses within sight, which were not very many, seemed to have at least their floors under water, except the railway buildings, which are set pretty high up. Out in the river horses were huddling themselves on to little bits of island that remained still uncovered. And altogether one could form a picture of the havoc likely to be wrought where the flood came rushing up, instead of stealthily creeping as it did here. We left Chimpay about two o'clock in the afternoon, on the return journey, for the track ahead was all under water. We passed safely over one of the culverts where the water had already carried away the earth behind the wing of the brickwork; if we had been an hour or so later I doubt if we should have got across. At Choele-

Choel we took a last look at this inhospitable and unpatriotic stream, which had thus interrupted the flow of other good things to which the champagne was to have been an accompaniment. It was rather cruel of the railway men to tell us of the preparations they had made to entertain us in Fort Roca, now that we knew we were not to reach it; and yet one felt sorry for the railway men most of all, for they had made us so comfortable, had left none of our wants unattended to, and their dearest wish was to carry out the programme.

Making the best of a bad job, we steamed slowly back to Fortin Uno, on the Colorado, where the three trains were again laid side by side, while we dined sumptuously. It was odd to think of it, as one sat in the coach surrounded by every accessory of civilization, in the place which a year or two ago was an outlying fort against the Indians. After dinner was over the speeches which had been delivered at the inauguration were handed round the coaches and read amidst great applause. Mr. White, as representative of the railway Company, had of course first call, and he welcomed the President and the guests more or less as follows: —

He told us that two years ago this journey, which we had made in peace and safety, was a matter of fifteen days, and of measureless discomforts. He recalled, with dramatic effect, the first message transmitted across the Atlantic by the cable — « Glory to God » in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will.» He pointed out that the latter description applied exactly to the English capitalist, to the English engineer, and to the members of the Argentine government. He reminded us that England was the first nation to recognize this country's independence and that British settlers were the pioneers in that industry which enables the British butcher to retail Argentine meat as the best home-fed (he did not use this expression, but then he was speaking in Spanish). He recalled also the action of Mr. David Robertson, who, thanks to the formation in 1862 of the Argentine Republic, and to the passing of the ever-blessed Companies Act in the same year, was able to connect Buenos Aires with Chascomús. He recalled the strenuous efforts of Messrs. Drabble, Fair and Parish, the latter at present Chairman of the Company, all happily still with us, and of others whose labours are ended. He predicted that the capital this day invested would find a plentiful return when these desert lands were fertilized by the waters of the Colorado and the Negro (at

which we cease our maledictions on these waters). He spoke of the labours of peace, and the beneficent action of just laws; and every legislator held up his head and looked the philanthropist he felt. He called on us all to drink the health of the President and to join in the hope that every year the immortal month of May might be signalized by events of such happy augury as this.

The President in reply recalled with legitimate pride the fact that just twenty years ago, at the head of the army of the Rio Negro, he had stood by these waters, and had taken the first great step towards the settlement of the Pampa and Patagonia. In those days all was desert beyond Azul—Olavarria, Carhué, Puán, Bahía Blanca, were but fortresses, lost in the immense expanse of the Pampa, which served perhaps to shelter a stray family or two, living in constant dread. The division which he had commanded had marched for forty days over ground that was practically unknown, in order to arrive at the confluence of the Limay and the Neuquen. Twenty years ago, in that picturesque valley, he had raised the Argentine standard, and camped by that great river, satisfied with the conclusion of an arduous campaign, the effective occupation of the nation's territory, and the permanent solution of the vexed frontier question. To-day, in the flush of this new victory, he wished to recall that of twenty years ago, and to bring to mind his companions in arms, who, though few of them were present now, had been the pioneers in the march of civilization for this territory. It was but fair to pay tribute to the Argentine soldier, who had thus opened up this great area, inherited from the colonial period, but hitherto abandoned to barbarism. This railway, he said, was the work of Dr. Uriburu's administration, and its inception was due to strategical reasons, which led to its being commenced at a time of national danger. By the goodness of providence, and the good sense of both peoples, it was destined to be a bond of peace and amity, and might yet have its terminus on the shores of the Pacific. At that moment of danger and difficulty, the Great Southern Railway had undertaken the work, had spared neither labour nor expense, and had completed the work with a rapidity hitherto unknown in this country: there it stood a testimony to the benefits of English capital and English enterprise. He wished to add to the names already mentioned in connection with the Southern Railway that of Mr. White, who had won the gratitude of his country by his

efforts on its behalf. The territories through which they had passed would undoubtedly be peopled at no distant period, and the Rio Negro would become another Nile. Fortunately the prospects of the country were good from all points of view. The Republic was at peace, internal order was maintained, the aspirations after progress were strong, and the future might be tranquilly and confidently faced. In these circumstances it was his pleasant duty to declare the line from Bahia Blanca to Neuquen open.

Needless to say, these sentiments were greeted with enthusiasm; and indeed it would have moved any one who had any sympathy with the struggles of a young country, and the efforts, too often unrewarded and even unappreciated, of its few rulers of genius, to witness the white-haired President, as he thus surveyed the crowning with success of the labours of a quarter of a century.

We all heard with pleasure too the message from Mr. Frank Parish, one who has all along had the deepest interest in the country of his birth, and who has contributed largely to its advancement, and to the propagation of just views regarding the Argentine Republic. He expressed the regret he felt at being unable to be present in person, and paid a personal tribute to General Roca, for whom the day's proceedings would make a new triumph of peace. The lapse of years and the infirmities of age prevented him from viewing otherwise than from a distance the growth and the destinies of the Argentine Republic and the Southern Railway, which he trusted would move hand in hand. The task which would naturally have fallen to him he left in able hands, for in Mr. White, who was to preside on behalf of the Company, they had a comrade and a citizen who was qualified to win the confidence of both nationalities, and to adorn the name of Argentina. Mr. White knew better than any one else how best to combine the interests of the Company with those of his native country. The memories of the long period he had spent among them, Mr. Parish went on to say, would never be effaced, and the companionship of his wife, who was also an Argentine, was another bond of union. He had contributed what he could, in his own sphere, to complete the work begun by his father, the first British representative who had by means of the treaty with the Argentine Republic cemented the friendship and promoted the interests of the two countries: under the inspiration of that ex-

ample he had laboured, each day gaining fresh faith in the future of the Republic.

After these speeches had been read, and the Argentine National Hymn and «God Save the Queen» had been sung, the unrehearsed speeches began. Mr. Allen, the Secretary of the Company, was very heartily welcomed, and spoke of the kindly feeling on the part of the Board which that day's proceedings had been intended to represent. The representatives of the various railways were duly toasted and responded: the press was not forgotten; and thereafter the good feeling which reigned found expression in a disposition to hunt out subjects to toast, with the view of making as many victims as possible. So merry was the company that we all but forgot our disappointment.

We left Fortin Uno about midnight, and arrived in Bahia Blanca early on the morning of Friday, June 2nd. Through the kindness of the railway officials, who were indefatigable in trying to compensate for our disappointment, we were taken to the military port, and shewn all over the ground. As a matter of fact, there is not very much to be seen as yet. The luxuriant trees which a contemporary had led us to expect, are having a hard time of it between wind and water. The area which is to be converted into a dry dock has been marked out and piled. Batteries are in course of construction, and a salute was fired from the 24 centimetre Krupp breechloaders with which they are being fitted. It was not a full salute, as the President had left us to continue his journey direct to Buenos Aires, although the original intention was that his train alone should go to the military port. The shore at Punta Alta seemed hard and pebbly, although it looked better at high tide than at low. Fresh water is plentiful, and the anchorage does not appear to be so bad as we were led to expect, for three of the ironclads were lying quite a short distance off shore. We were a little annoyed at being kept waiting, without apparent reason, when we were ready to leave the loop line which belongs to the government; and our annoyance was not diminished when we learned that the government officials had chosen to stop behind to christen a battery or something of the sort, without, so far as we know, consulting the railway officials who were really their hosts.

Altogether, however, the day was pleasantly spent. Dinner was served before we left Bahia Blanca, and so, for the second

time, we missed the only scenery of the journey, for daylight found us at Lamadrid, or thereabouts. We made somewhat slow progress, owing to a strong head wind, but dropping some of the coaches at Azul we made better speed, which was the more welcome as we had now run into bad weather, the camps in towards Craig seeming wetter than on the day we went out.

All three trains got into Buenos Aires in good time on Saturday evening; and all of us who had had the good fortune to be the guests of the Great Southern Railway felt that we had had a most enjoyable outing, had seen much new country that was worth seeing, and if we had not altogether accomplished that which we set out to do, had also seen much that we had not hoped to see, and that was also well worth seeing.

Opening of the Neuquen Extension of the Great Southern Railway

WITH TRAIN N.° 2

From the Buenos Ayres "Standard"

As our readers already know, the excursion to open the Neuquen extension of the Great Southern Railway from Bahia Blanca to the Neuquen, left Plaza Constitucion Station on board three special trains on Wednesday morning last, all the trains getting away on time excepting the first, with the President of the Republic, his Ministers and other gentlemen connected with the national administration on board, and that was delayed about four minutes to allow the President to inspect the locomotive which drew it. Our representatives were on train N.° 2, which left the Station at 7.30 a. m. « sharp », leaving behind, as we have since been informed, a half dozen gentlemen who arrived a few minutes behind time, and who have our sincere sympathy, although they know not what they missed by pinning their faith to the Spanish god « mañana ». And here we may as well state that as the excursionists were (with the exception of part of the afternoon and evening of Thursday and some ten hours on Friday) confined to their respective trains, our description will be largely from the point of view of train N.° 2.

As all the trains were very heavy and made up in much the same manner, description of N.° 2 will do for all. First came the

locomotive, a fine compound of the four-coupled and bogie type with extended smoke box, 17 × 24 - in. and 24 ½ × 24 - in. cylinders, 5 - ft. 8 - in. driving wheels, and judging from the looks of the boiler head, a modified Belpaire firebox. She had but recently been turned out at Sola, where she had been entirely rebuilt under the direction of the Locomotive Superintendent Mr. Gould, and changed from a simple into a compound, the Wordsell and Van Bores system being used. Next to the locomotive was coupled a guard's-van, then a large eight - wheeled sleeping-coach for the staff engaged in running the train, next an eight-wheeled luggage van filled with provisions; it was loaded from floor to roof with — but that's another story, and we will deal with it later on. Then came two eight-wheeled restaurant coaches; and following them four eight-wheeled sleeping coaches; after these came the « Coche comedor de los Ingleses », as our Argentine friends christened it, then two eight - wheeled sleeping coaches and the official coach occupied by the Gt. Southern officials who accompanied train N. 2. At El Puerto (Bahia Blanca port) a tank car, also eight-wheeled, was added, and the official coach of the Western Railway, which is mounted on twelve wheels. This made a total of 6(axles, six more than either of the other trains had.

After getting settled in the section of the sleeping coach assigned to us, where we found Mr. J. Monteith Drysdale and Mr. T. D. Brooke, the new Chief Accountant of the Central Argentine, who were to be our room mates, we soon found our way with the others to the dining-coach, and as the train left the main line at Temperley sat down to a most appetizing early breakfast, English style, eggs, ham and eggs, cold ham, etc., being served with the coffee and tea to those who wished for them. As we passed along though the rich green camps and thriving towns on the Cañuelas branch, scanning the morning papers and enjoying conversation with our fellow - travellers, all noted the thoroughly wet condition of the country; there was considerable surface water, as far as Gorch, but beyond it was drier although the ground appeared to be well soaked, and a well - known estanciero who met the train at Las Flores informed us that if there should be more rain at present every drop of water that fell would stand on the surface. As we passed though Cañuelas shortly before 9 o'clock the station was crowded and cheers went up from the assembly as the train rolled by.

About 10.30, shortly after passing Videla Dorna, there was quite a demonstration in the coach and on turning to discover the cause of it, our eyes fell on General Manager Loveday who was just entering the door. He was heartily welcomed and congratulated on the success of the slight operation that he had undergone while in the hands of Dr. O'Conor at the British Hospital. In fact, this was Mr. Loveday's first appearance in public since the operation, he having left the hospital to take the train.

Las Flores was reached on time and here we changed locomotives, a large six-coupled goods engine with a pony truck forward or what would be called in that great railroading country the United States, a Mogul, being attached to our train. A great crowd was assembled at the station and appeared much interested in all that went on, but we cannot say that they were very demonstrative, perhaps they had tired themselves out when the Presidential train stopped there. Our stay at Las Flores was not a long one, and as we steamed out a faint cheer greeted our ears in the sleeping coaches where we were preparing for breakfast.

Promptly at noon we were summoned to breakfast, and all did ample justice to the carefully prepared and nicely served meal. Early in the afternoon *the* question seemed to be «When shall we «get news of the result of the Derby?» During the forenoon a member of the party got up a «Sweepstakes» on the race; the gentleman that drew Flying Fox, Mr. Glasgow, evidently did not consider that horse a sure winner for he sold him to Mr. Jewell, the well known owner of the Las Petacas estancia, in Santa Fé, and when a telegram was received early in the afternoon announcing the winner, the latter gentleman was found to be the lucky man.

On passing through Azul all were struck with the thrifty looks of the town, everything seeming to be kept up in good order; the Fair grounds to the West of the line are centrally located, with good «Galpones» and cattle pens and a large central pavilion. There were some fifteen neatly uniformed police, a fine looking body of men, drawn up on the platform to keep the crowd back. We may as well note here that the police seen at all the stations in the province of Buenos Ayres were well dressed and an intelligent looking body of men.

The aspect of the country had been changing as we approached Azul, and it was evident that we were rising to a higher level. A range of hills came into view on our left and soon another

on our right and our speed had slackened considerably, the long train pulling heavily. From Hinojo the penal settlement at Sierra Chica was plainly visible on the right, and looked like a distant fortress. Olavarria was passed about half-past three, the station and platform being simply packed with the largest crowd that had greeted us at any station on the trip. The streets were crowded with carriages and a brass band on the platform played its best, while bombs exploded in the air and the whole scene was one of general jollification.

The clouds which had partly cleared away gathered again as the evening drew on and we were treated to a brilliant but short exhibition of colors at sunset. Again, much later, long after darkness had settled down, our attention was called to what was thought to be two fires in the camp, but in a little while it was plain that the red glow observable was due to the last expiring effort of the sinking sun.

At Lamadrid a goodly crowd had gathered on the platform and we were welcomed with exploding bombs and subdued cheers. Here we changed engines again and after a short stop continued on our journey. Dinner time was now at hand and we soon found ourselves seated at tables on which was served as goodly a repast as one can obtain at the crack restaurants in Buenos Aires. The «Coche comedor de los ingleses» held a jolly company, all appeared to be acquainted and all were pleasant travelling companions. When the dessert was served Mr. Gould, who was the principal representative of the Great Southern on the train, rose and in a few well chosen words welcomed the party, and Mr. Runciman replied thanking him most cordially in the name of all present for the courtesies extended.

The evening passed quickly in conversation, card-playing, reading, etc., whist being the favourite game. Passing through the other dining coaches during the evening we found many Argentines engaged in playing truco, chess and even poker, while in one of the coaches a phonograph was giving forth operatic and other music which was listened to by a large number of persons. One Argentine gentleman who seemed to be familiar with all parts of the country asked for an explanation of the following interesting fact. In Santiago del Estero, goat-skins are worth $ 1.80, while a live goat with his skin in its proper place is worth only 80 cents. or $ 1.00 less than the skin

without the goat. No one seemed equal to solving the problem and gave it up, and asked for the reason, but the propounder of the conundrum had no answer ready. Eleven o'clock found most of the occupants of the «Coche comedor de los ingleses» in bed or preparing to retire, one table was occupied by a whist-party, at another a poker-party was just breaking up, and as we passed on to our compartment we left one or two gentlemen deeply absorbed in their novels.

On Thursday morning we awoke to find our train steaming up the valley of the Colorado some 920 kilometres from Buenos Aires, a short distance west of Juan de Garay which place is 214 kilometres from El Puerto. The sky was a leaden grey and on our right flowed the waters of the Colorado looking cold and uninviting in the dull light of the early morning. Rumours of a washout ahead were being bandied about as we stepped into the dining-car and on enquiring of one of the Great Southern officers we found that they were only too true, the Negro was said to have risen to an extraordinary height and the track of the new line at various points beyond Chimpay, a place 1.070 kilometres from Buenos Aires was reported to be under water. There were small points of cattle and sheep feeding among the clumps of bush in the river-valley, and those who should know, large land-owners in other parts of the country who examined the soil, grasses and bush shortly after, when we arrived at Pichi Mahuida, were satisfied that with irrigation and a little cultivation the whole aspect of the country could be quickly changed, and the present uninviting outlook made to give way to one that would delight the eye of the estanciero or agriculturist.

As the train reached Pichi Mahuida, 936 kilometres from Buenos Aires, many of the party who were not up were awakened by the bombs that saluted our arrival. A stop of some minutes was made here, and many of the party walked along the river bank while some went down to the water, which was very cold. A large estancia house not far from the station was decked with flags, as was also a pulpería, and a half dozen «Poblaciones» looked unusually well kept, and near the pulpería was a large blacksmith's shop.

The prognostications as to the value of the lands before mentioned, were confirmed here, for on enquiry we found that the Pichi Mahuida station is located in the centre of the fine property belonging to Mr. Anthony Claraz, the Land Agent of the Great Southern

and his partners Messrs Morand and De Boucherville. There are two good ferries just above the station a few hundred metres apart, one of them equipped with a boat capable of taking a large ox-cart and six oxen on board. Years and years before the possibility of the Great Southern building a railway up the valley entered any one's head this place was christened Paso Claraz, and by that name it is still known by the residents for leagues around. The business of the railway at Pichi Mahuida since the line has been opened to that point has developed in a marvellous manner, and far more produce is being shipped to Bahía Blanca than was calculated on. Wool, hides, etc. from estancias many leagues to the north of the Colorado in the Pampa Central are now brought there for shipment, as the new station is nearer to them than the stations on the Bahía Blanca and North Western. Our readers should remember that the Colorado divides the territory of the Pampa Central from that of Río Negro, which lies on the southern side of the river.

A little farther up the river, but still on the Claraz property, is a fine quarry of blue granite, from which the stone for the bridge abutments, piers and the culvert walls on the new line has been taken. This granite is of the same class as that of Tandil, which it fully equals, and we are informed that Mr. Claraz and his partners gladly furnished the stone used by the railway free of cost, the company simply doing the quarrying with its own men.

The land in the Pampa Central, or to the North of the Colorado is better than that to the South over towards the Negro, and again the land on the barrancas up out of the Colorado valley on both sides is superior to that in the valley, which is more sandy than the higher lands. Of the land on the divide between the Colorado and Negro we shall speak later on. The train order having come and some other information along with it, it became known that we were to go on to Choele-Choel crossing the morning train for Bahía Blanca at Benjamin Zorrilla, a station not far from the summit of the divide between the Colorado and Negro valleys. At Choele-Choel it was said we should catch up train Nº 1, or « The President's Train » as it was called, and that then a decision would be made as to our future movements. As we left Pichi Mahuida soon after 8 o'clock and assembled in the dining-coach to take our coffee, etc., there was much speculation as to our future movements. Both Mr. Wibberley, of the Buenos Aires and Rosario,

and Mr. Loveday, of the Central Argentine, were appealed to as authorities on floods owing to their recent experience in Santa Fé, and seemed to agree that they generally come at exactly the wrong time, or in other words when they will cause the most trouble, and also, they frequently if not generally put in an appearance at most unexpected places. and often reach a point far above the high-water mark as fixed in the mind of the oldest inhabitant.

Fortin Uno was reached about 8,45. This is the station farthest West in the Colorado Valley and the line had already reached a higher level above the river than at Pichi Mahuida. After a short stop we started on our journey over the divide, first keeping along parallel to the river for three or four kilometres, and then swinging round to the left in a southerly direction. The aspect of the country changed as we rose higher, and, although some sheep and cows were seen a few kilometres after leaving Fortin Uno, the only animal seen after losing sight of them until we aproached the Negro valley was a solitary huanaco. Still it is a fact that the land improves all the way to the Negro and that the railway crosses on the most barren part of the divide. Four or five leagues east of the line, the land improves rapidly and has been purchased by hardheaded camp-owners, after examination, for prices ranging from $ 6,000 up to $ 10,000 per league. On both the north and south sides of the divide a long way from the river, « puesteros » have obtained sweet water in some places, although along the line wells have been sunk without finding any.

Mr. Thays, the director of public parks, etc. here in Buenos Aires, it is most interesting to note, has a number of shrubs under cultivation, which he obtained on the divide, and is satisfied that not only will they thrive splendidly in gardens here in the city, but will serve to ornament them. What is more important, however, is that the same gentleman noticed some plants of the Atriplex family to which the salt-bush belongs, on the lands between the Colorado and Negro, and is satisfied that the future of that section as a grazing country rests on the planting of it with salt-bush. Both Mr. Hickey, the Secretary of the Local Committee of the Great Southern, and Mr. Claraz, have been presented by President Roca with a few pounds of salt-bush roots, which were sent from Washington, and these gentlemen will have them planted on their lands in the South early in the Spring.

There is some rather heavy work in places between Fortin Uno

and Choele-Choel, both cuttings and fillings, and a considerable amount of rock a peculiar sort of sandstone, has been handled. At Benjamin Zorrilla, not far from the summit, which station is exactly 1.000 kilometres from Buenos Aires, we met and passed the regular train from Chelforó, in which we observed Major Vedia. Continuing our journey toward the Negro Valley, after a stop of only a couple of minutes, there was little or no change in the appearance of the country until we broke through the barranca almost opposite the town of Choele-Choel, which lies on the North-Easterly bank of the branch of the Negro that passes round the island of Choele-Choel on its northerly and easterly side. The town is located about opposite the middle of the island, a long distance from the railway and still farther from Choele-Choel Station.

Here the line curves round to the right and follows along the Negro valley in a Westerly direction. As we broke through the barranca and gradually swung round to the west an entirely new scene lay before us. A vast expanse of flat land and water came into view, while, far away as the eye could reach, across the broad valley, could be seen what was evidently the barranca on the south side, and it took a pair of good eyes, unless they were aided by field glasses, to make anything tangible out of the distant objects. The great width of the valley was instantly apparent to all. As we skirted along the face of the barranca, gradually dropping to a lower level, it was plain to see that the valley was flooded although there was more land than water in sight. Soon we spied what appeared and proved to be a row of telegraph poles standing up out of a broad sheet of smooth water which made them plainly visible; again they would disappear from view as they crossed a piece of dry ground. As we approached Choele-Choel station our view became less extended and as we drew up there soon after half-past ten o'clock there was no water to be seen near at hand.

At Choele-Choele all left the train to stretch their legs and see what was to be seen. Aside from the railway buildings, and one or two others, the half-dozen structures in sight were of a most primitive character, and with the dark and threatening cloud and sombre landscape the view was far from cheering. Some four miles or more up the valley could be seen the smoke and steam rising from the chimney of the locomotive of the Presidential train as it moved slowly along, and after some time spent in speculating as to the possibility of reaching Villa Roca and examining the appara-

tus used in boring a well—which, by the way, had been driven down some 350 metres, or over 1150 feet, without finding sweet water—while baskets of coal were being emptied into the tender of our locomotive, we finally started up the valley about 11 o'clock.

For a few kilometres there was little water to be seen; then it began to appear on the side towards the river, which by the way flows far off to the left, on the other side of the valley, near the Southern 'barranca' and out of sight from the railway, its course being marked by the clumps and rows of trees along its banks. The filling in most places between Choel-Choel and Chimpay is very low, not more than two or three feet in the highest places, and the line has been well ditched on both sides and culverts built where necessary to take the water falling between the 'barranca' and the line through to the river. As we approached the Arroyo Salado, a little branch of the Negro that turns off on the northerly side of that stream just above Chimpay and flows in towards the barranca near Chimpay station and then keeps almost parallel with the line down to a point about 10 kilometres north of Choele-Choel Station, the water increased and was to be seen flowing along on both sides of the line quite rapidly. We were now going very slow, and although we were at breakfast many of the car-windows were raised and as much interest was taken in what was going on outside the coach as inside. Now we passed over a culvert with a strong flow of water passing out toward the river, a little later some flooded and deserted «Poblaciones» came into view on our left, looking forlorn to a degree as did small groups of horses and cattle huddled together here and there on patches of dry ground. After passing over somewhat drier ground for a short distance we found ourselves where the water was almost up to the web of the rails and had washed the dirt off the tops of the sleepers. The current soon increased in force on the river side of the line, and in a few moments we came to a culvert where the water was rushing through from the river towards the «barranca» like a mill race. This proved too much for Mr. Mills, the recently appointed Chief Engineer of the Great Southern, who was breakfasting at our table, and he deserted to take up a position on the platform of the coach. A lively whirlpool had formed at the end of each of the outer wings of the culvert and it was evident that the water would cut though the filling at the back of the culvert walls, and probably before very long.

Shortly after passing this culvert we made quite a long run over comparatively dry ground, and in the distance out toward the Negro we observed the deserted and partially flooded buildings of the Estancia San Pablo, the property of Colonel Belisle. Again we found the water well up on the line for some distance, and more «poblaciones» were to be seen out towards the river, flooded and deserted. Chimpay was reached not far from one o'clock in the afternoon, for it had been necessary to run very slowly most of the way from Choele-Choel, and here we found ourselves on dry ground with the Presidential train awaiting our arrival on a siding, while the line ahead disappeared beneath the flood. Again all left the train, and many sought friends who had travelled by train N° 1, in one of which the President could be seen chatting with a group of friends. On looking about us, it appeared that we were on a sort of island surrounded by the steadily rising flood excepting on one side, for the line over which we had just come was still dry on top, although the water was flowing along both sides of it. The goods shed of the railway located opposite the station and raised some three feet above the level of the line had been thrown open to the inabitants of the surrounding «poblaciones», who had been forced to flee from their premises by the flood, and who stood around wrapped up in their «ponchos», looking miserable enough.

We here learned that, after breakfast on the Presidential train, speeches had been made and the new line declared open, while the beautiful solid silver cup—a Doncaster Cup by the way—had been presented to the President. Nevertheless, it was practically decided before we left Chimpay that the three trains were to be drawn up together side by side at Choele-Choel or Fortin Uno that evening, and a dinner served in place of the banquet that should have taken place at Villa Roca.

All the railway men were most anxious for train N° 3 to arrive, that we might start back for Choele-Choel and all of us who had had previous experience of floods, while travelling couldn't forget the condition of the culvert where the waters were flowing so rapidly, for should it wash out before we passed over it on our return to Choele-Choel, we might be cut off from that place for some time. At last N° 3 came in sight and soon reached the station, and immediately arrangements were made to shunt the trains and get the engines attached to the down river ends. The rapidity with which

the flood was rising was patent to all observers. Where it had been dry when we arrived the water was now begining to show itself, it was working its way across one of the lines following along a half-dozen of the sleepers and gradually forming a puddle between the main line and one of the sidings. Mr. Gregory and his assistants were most active and soon N° 1 was ready to start back. Sleepers, posts and some dimension timber were placed on the tank-car at the back of the engine to be ready in case of an emergency, and with a long toot of the whistle the train got away.

Soon N° 2 was made ready and got away some 20 minutes after N° 1; in the meantime, the water had risen nearly an inch since the departure of that train. We started back at about 2 o'clock and it was not long before we noticed that the water in some of the low places was begining to run across the line. On reaching the culvert that had given us so much anxiety we found that a gang of trackmen had reached the spot. The train came to a full stop and then on starting proceeded at a snail's pace over the culvert, and as our coach passed over, we noted that the water had cut a channel behind the easterly wall some two feet wide and was rushing through with much force, but the filling appeared to be of a very tenacious earth and was holding its own splendidly against the rushing waters. Once over, we went along faster and reached Choele-Choel without difficulty, although the water was considerably higher in all places than when we had been running west during the forenoon. At Choele-Choel we learned that Fortin Uno had been decided on as the place for assembling the trains for the dinner and after a short stop we continued on our journey over the divide. It was too dark to see much of the thorn bushes, cactus plants etc on the way back, but we knew they were there for we had seen them that morning.

The flood in the Negro Valley when we were there had reached a point, according to both Mr. Malmen and some of the Government engineers, considerably above the high-water mark of the flood of December last, which in its turn had reached a higher mark than the flood of 20 years ago. The Rio Negro Valley is very flat and once the river overflows it takes but a slight rise to practically flood the whole valley, a rise of 18 inches or 2 feet above the river-bank being sufficient for the purpose. The water that we saw had been caused principally by a flood that came out of the Neuquen; but that night Mr. Malmen got word that a tre-

mendous flood was coming down the Limay, and it was the water from this latter river that caused the greatest rise in the Negro of which there is any record, the new high-water mark being no less than seven metres above the ordinary level of the river, while the railway line has been three metres under water in places. A flood from the Neuquen is of short duration, as the water-shed drained by it is comparatively of small area, but the watershed drained by the Limay is very extensive, and a flood from that river is of much longer duration. The Neuquen rises and falls quickly, but when the Limay once rises above the danger point it means a long, serious flood; both these rivers rise in the Andes. That night at eleven o'clock the water stood ten centimetres over the rails in front of Chimpay station.

We arrived at Fortin Uno shortly before 7 p. m. and found the Presidential train on a line to our right, and when later on N.° 3 arrived it was drawn up on a siding beyond N.° 1. There was a rush for the telegraph-office as each train arrived, headed by the press representatives, but the prospect of getting messages through to Buenos Aires in time for the morning papers was far from encouraging, for there was but one instrument to transmit the many railway messages made necessary by the existing emergency and such messages naturally took precedence over all others. However, later on, when the rush of railway messages was out of the way, Traffic Superintendent Gregory had the operator shut up in his office with instructions to give his undivided attention to the press and public messages. And here we may say that had the party reached Villa Roca we should have found that special arrangements had been made for handling the press and public telegrams, for extra instruments in the hands of expert operators had been set up there especially for that purpose.

Soon after 7 o'clock we sat down to dinner, and what a dinner it was! Surely, never had such a repast been served in that section of the country, although, in apologizing for not being able to banquet us at Villa Roca, Mr. Secretary Allen referred to it as an «impromptu dinner at the desert station of Fortin Uno, far away »from all evidence of civilization». However cheerless the scene outside might have been, in the brilliantly lighted dining-coaches, with their tables spread with snowy linen and laid with shining glass and silver, with a bunch of flowers in the centre and a boutonniere for each guest, it was one of good cheer, and, as

course after course of appetizing viands was disposed of, no one gave a thought to «what might have been» had the floods held off.

Towards the end of the dinner, Mr. Gould was called from the table and shortly returned with a number of small packages which he quietly emptied into a silver bread-basket, under cover of a napkin, in a most mysterious manner. Visions of a few choice strawberries, the last of the Neuquen crop carefully preserved, entered our head; soon after with the remark «I will go through the »other coaches first», he left our coach with the basket, accompanied by an attendant. The excitement amongst those who sat near enough to Mr. Gould to see what had been taking place now rose to fever heat, and when that gentleman returned, holding a beautiful silver medal in each hand, he was greeted with a cheer. The secret was now out, we were all to become gold or silver medallists of the Great Southern Railway! Slowly he passed through the coach handing a medal to each gentleman present. Mr. Mills, Mr. Beck and Mr. Ballantyne, as well as the distributor, received a neat case containing a gold medal—they all being high officers of the railway—and the others received medals of silver. The medals are four centimetres long from pendant to point, and a little less than three and a half across at the broadest part, the design being exceedingly neat and tasteful. The obverse shows in relief, the arms of the Great Southern Railway, which closely resemble those of the Nation; on the reverse in relief are the words «Gran « Ferrocarril del Sud, Inauguracion Prolongación al Neuquen, Ju-« nio 1899.» Both the arms and the legend are within a circle surrounded and supported by a scroll.

The time for toasts and speech-making had now arrived, and just as our master of ceremonies, Mr. Gould, was about to rise, the strains of the National Hymn played by the band with train N.° 3, were wafted to our ears and we at once rose to our feet. Shortly after, «God Save the Queen» was heard and all joined in singing the British National Anthem. Then Mr. Gregory entered the opposite end of the coach with the speeches of President Roca, Chairman Parish of the Great Southern Board, and Chairman White of the Great Southern Local Committee, in his hand, which he passed to Dr. E. Lamarca with the request to read them. Dr. Lamarca rose and with great care read the three speeches, which were in Spanish; first that of Chairman Parish. then that of Mr. White and finally that of President Roca. (A synopsis of these speeches, has

already been published in our columns). As the last speech was concluded the whole company rose to their feet and drank to the health of the President of the Republic giving him three times three cheers, with a «tiger» at the end. The toast of the Argentine Republic was then drunk with equal enthusiasm. Following this the thanks of the assembled guests were extended to Dr. Lamarca and they joined in singing «For he is a jolly good fellow» in a most hearty fashion. In replying to this ovation the Doctor rose and said: —

«Gentlemen, you have heard me as Mr. Frank Parish, whose eloquent phrases I have read to you at Mr. Gregory's request; you have, moreover, listened to me as Mr. William White, the Chairman of the Southern Railway Local Board, whose eloquent words I have likewise repeated to you; and, last, though not least, you have lent most attentive ears to my reading of President Roca's broad views on the importance of the inauguration of the Neuquen extension. Any moderate man would think those three remarkable speeches were enough oratory for one single sitting. However, you seem bent upon my addressing you also; and if I meekly yield to your strange wishes, pray do not blame me for a disappointment which will be the effect of your own wilfulness.

«It strikes me, gentlemen, that we have been tearing across the pampas in a most uproarious fashion: outside, the thundering of the trains and their puffing locomotives frightening away the scared *huanacos* and awakening the sleeping echoes of the desert; inside, the flowing bumper, the cracking of jokes and the loud shouts of laughter which shook our very tables with merriment. (*Hear, hear!*) All these boisterous manifestations, all this genuine pleasure is owing to that wonderful result of the action of capital, science and financial combination which is called a Railway.

«I believe I understand, and I certainly admire the stubborn Britons who are not to be deterred by any difficulties, who will conquer and master nature, and lay their metals from the shores of the River Plate to the foot of the Andes; but what I utterly fail to grasp is why such a set of jolly and most convivial men should force a timid, nervous (*groans, Oh! Oh!*) modest and unobtrusive middle-aged gentleman to speak, thus placing him in a most awkward position. (*more groans and Ohs!*) I wonder why people will always indulge in the pleasure, the very dubious pleasure of

torturing their shy and inoffensive neighbours into making after-dinner speeches? » (*Laughter*). Most likely it is because the «sucking of the subtle blood of the grape», as Shakespeare says, produces a seething which must need end in a froth of words. (*Hear, hear.*) Well, gentlemen, since you ask for it, that is the froth I am giving you (*Great laughter and applause*).

«Now, seriously speaking, allow me to tell you that I cannot drive away an idea which is continually coming to my mind. I cannot forget that the Argentine Government has favoured the construction of the Neuquen extension with most liberal concessions and privileges, because we considered that this line was strategically necessary for our national defence. » (*Hear, hear, hear.*) « However, I do rejoice that, instead of hearing the stern alarums of war, we have only had to listen to the hearty and warm congratulations of the friends of the Great Southern Railway Company. » (*Hear hear.*) I am also right glad that, instead of transporting guns and soldiers, the trains have only transported us, who are so many messengers of peace, progress and of civilization » (*Laughter and applause*). «Hurrah! then, for Anglo-Argentine schemes! « Hurrah! for Anglo-Argentine works; and, above all, Hurrah for Anglo-Argentine friendship! (*Cheers and applause*). In the name of my countrymen, I drink to the health of the sons of Merry old England; and as I am greatly indebted to the « Old Country », having been educated there, allow me to express my gratefulness by proposing a toast, than which none more welcome to British loyal hearts. Gentlemen: The Queen! «—(*Loud cheers and applause and «God Save the Queen» was sung by the whole party in a most enthusiastic manner*).

Just as Dr. Lamarca finished speaking, Mr. H. C. Allen of London, the Secretary of the Great Southern entered the coach and took a seat at the front end. Immediately a toast to the Great Southern Railway was proposed and coupled with it was the name of Mr Secretary Allen.

After the applause with which the toast was received had subsided, Mr. Allen rose and in responding for the Great Southern Railway Company, said that while he deeply regretted that their Chairman Mr. Parish, one of the other Directors, or someone more worthy than himself was not present to respond to such a toast, he equally deeply realized the honour that had been conferred upon him in coupling his name with such a grand enterprise as the

Great Southern Railway. He was, however, at the present time one of its oldest officers, and this, added to the fact of his being the only direct London representative of the Board now in the country, perhaps gave him some small claim to accept the distinction. While, however, most cordially thanking the guests for the hearty way in which they had toasted the Company, he felt that he and his fellow-officers had some cause for humiliation, and they were inclined to hang their heads in remorse, at having partially failed in carrying out their undertaking. They had invited their friends to join them at a grand banquet at Villa Roca, instead of which here they were participating in a scratch or improvised dinner at the desert station of Fortin Uno, far away from all evidences of civilization; beyond, a partially submerged railway, but he maintained that the company had done its best and that the Act of God alone prevented the full realization of what would have been one of the greatest achievements of railway enterprise, viz., the transport of 300 guests in absolute comfort and luxury to a royal banquet at Villa Roca, 800 miles from head-quarters, and this entirely independent of all outside assistance in the shape of either rolling-stock or refreshment contractors. Unfortunately, they could only take his word for what would have been had Roca been reached, but he must ask them to accept what they had experienced so far as some evidence of the greater pleasures from which the flood had separated them, and he was most grateful to them for their sympathy as also for the splendid way in which everyone had combined to convert what might have been a fiasco into a tolerably enjoyable inauguration festival.

Then referring to the wonderful development of the Southern Railway, he said: It was only 37 years ago that it adopted the then somewhat vain-glorious title of the Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railway with a capital of but £ 700.000 and only 70 miles of line, but time soon proved their right to this title, for the little railway rapidly developed and has now not only intersected the whole of the province but extended even beyond the provincial boundaries, thereby not only justly earning the title of the Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railway, but also the right to adopt the still prouder title of the *Argentine* Great Southern, for we today have no less than £ 24,000,000 sterling invested in the Railway, with over 2,200 miles of line open for traffic working, and even now we are by no means an extinct volcano, for so long as traffic pros-

peot will justify railway construction, we shall be quite prepared to meet its reasonable demands and requirements. As an evidence of this it is only necessary to refer to the fact that notwithstanding the severe financial and commercial crisis of 1890, since which all enterprise has been practically at a standstill and the pockets of the British investor have been tightly closed against Argentine investments, the Southern has, by the careful and judicious administration of its property, maintained its financial credit to such an extent that it has raised no less than £ 10,000,000 sterling from its shareholders and constructed some 1,300 miles of new line besides carrying out many other important new works. Therefore I maintain that, while there is no disputing the fact that the shareholders have done well in the past and have every reason to be satisfied with their property and the friendly relations which have at all times existed between the Company and the Government and the public, the country has received corresponding, of not greater, benefits. There has been some talk about high tariffs, but the public may rest assured that the interests of the Railway and the producers are one, and the tariff question is most closely watched by both the Board and Management, and everything is being done to foment the development of both the agricultural and pastoral industries of the districts served by the Company, and they may rely upon it to do its utmost to attain this object.»

He added that from what he had seen during his visit to the Argentine he was convinced that it was a grand country for the English to live and work in, and be felt sure that, apart from the old home across the Ocean, there was no country in the wide world one would prefer to the Argentine Republic.

Before resuming his seat he claimed the speaker's privilege of proposing a toast, viz., that of a neighbouring Company closely allied by many ties to the Great Southern. It was fortunate in having the same Chairman as also several of the same directors, and had been remarkable for the same plucky enterprise in the North that the Southern had been famous for in the South. He referred to the Buenos Aires and Rosario Railway, and be took the liberty of coupling with the toast the name of Mr. Wibberley, the able Assistant Manager.

Mr. Allen was often interrupted by the applause and demonstrations of approval on the part of the assembled guests, and when he apologized for not having been able to carry out the original plan

and banquet them at Villa Roca, it was made plain that they did not consider any apology necessary.

The company again rose to their feet and the toast being duly honoured, Mr. Wibberley took the floor and said:

Mr. Allen and gentlemen: I am convinced that there exists in this assembly a conspiracy to force some of us to make a speech against our desire to be silent, but as my name has been associated with the reference to the Rosario Railway, I am constrained to say a few words as I can see no way of escape. *(Laughter).*

I am sure I am only expressing the sentiments of all of you when I say that I deplore the fact that we have not been permitted to enjoy in its entirety the programme arranged for this inaugural trip, because we have already had sufficient evidence that no effort had been spared on the part of the Great Southern Railway's representatives and officials to make the event a complete success, and the boundless hospitality which had been extended to us has been a good augury of the luxurious repast that awaited us if we could only have continued our march to Villa Roca. *(Hear, hear).* Nature's forces, have, however, debarred our progress, the desert has been converted into an ocean, and we can only cast our thoughts behind, and sigh, taking confort in the knowledge that our loss is others' gain! *(Laughter).*

Personally, I can fully sympathise with our hosts, because I had to share the anxieties of a similarly unexpected disaster which befell the Rosario Railway only three moths ago, when its lines were washed away by the floods which followed the extraordinary rainfalls in the Province of Santa Fé. We have shewn here, however, that we can bear disappointment with fortitude and the improvised banquet we have just partaken of has given us solace. I can only describe it as «esplendido»! *(Hear, hear!)*

We have to-day assisted in the inauguration of an important work, another addition to the great network of railways, which have done so much to develop the resources of this vast country; and. whatever may have been the original object for constructing the line to Neuquen, I hope it will have the effect of transforming this dreary wilderness into smiling plains in the days to come, and that the enterprise of the Great Southern Railway Company will bring its own reward, and justify the immense outlay of capital which this extension has involved. (*Hear, hear*).

I wish that the esteemed Chairman of this great railway system

could have been with us to day, because I know what a deep interest he takes in its progress, as well as that of the Rosario Railway Company, and I thank Mr. Allen for coupling my name with his allusion to the Rosario Railway, and you for the hearty manner in which you have accepted the toast. (*Hearty applause*).

After this, toast followed toast, and speech followed speech in a lively fashion, but the speeches were all short, largely of a personal character and would not prove especially interesting to the general reader, if we may except one or two to which we shall refer later on. All the toasts were drunk in a most enthusiastic fashion, and from the crowd that gathered around the « Coche comedor de los »Ingleses» and crowded the platforms and doors, it was evident that it was the principal centre of attraction of the evening. Mr. Krabbé, General Manager Henderson, Mr. Hickey, Mr. Claraz and other gentlemen connected with the railway who were assigned to the other trains quickly found their way to our dining-car, and many of them remained throughout the evening, as did a number of the other persons who were travelling by Trains N.° 1 or N.° 3.

After Mr. Wibberley had spoken, Messrs Loveday, Gould, Munro, Simpson, Thurburn, Gregory, Mills, J. Monteith Drysdale, Cook, Dr. O'Conor, Runciman, Hickey, Partridge, Paton, Galwey, Lowe and Coleman took the floor in turn in replying to the toasts which followed. Mr. Mills, as Chief Engineer of the Great Southern, spoke most feelingly of the disappointment that Mr. Malmen, the constructing engineer of the Neuquen extension, must have experienced when he found that the 300 guests of the railway headed by the President of the Republic had arrived only to find a large part of his new line under water. He had experienced somewhat similar disappointments himself, and knowing the pride that an engineer takes in his work he could assure the company that Mr. Malmen was undoubtedly the most unhappy man connected with the Great Southern Railway that night, although it was through no fault of his that they had been prevented in carrying out the original plan of inaugurating the Neuquen Extension at Villa Roca.

A short time before it became necessary for Mr. H. C. Allen to return to train N.° 1, which was getting ready to leave, he again rose and said:

That, although he did not approve of speaking twice, he felt it his bounden duty, as also his privilege as Secretary of the Company,

to propose the health of two officers who had recently retired from the Great Southern Company, neither of whom, in their respective capacities, had been equalled in capacity in the history of Railway enterprise in the Argentine Republic, and so long as the Great Southern lasted their names would remain associated with it. He referred to Mr. Barrow, the late General Manager, and Mr. I. Cook, the late Accountant. As regards the former, he was so well-known in the Railway world that it was quite unnecessary to dwell on the zeal and ability which he had displayed during the term of his administration, and the highest compliment he could pay was merely to point to the present efficiency of the service and the ease with which the new Manager, Mr. Henderson, had been able to take over the important post now held by him, without the smallest prejudice to the undertaking, as so clearly exemplified by the way in which the present somewhat complicated transport arrangements had been carried out in connection with the inauguration. Mr. Henderson had assured him (Mr. Allen) that he had found all in perfect order and had experienced no difficulty in taking up the reins of government as relinquished by Mr. Barrow. As regards Mr. Cook he was well-known to all as an expert Accountant and he (Mr. Allen) could safely state that the reorganization of the Company's accounts as carried out by Mr. Cook was absolutely perfect, as had been proved by the facility with which it had been possible to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Cook's retirement, by the promotion of one of their own employés. He therefore asked those present to join with him in drinking health, long life, and prosperity, to Mr. Barrow, the most efficient Manager, and to Mr. Cook, the ablest Accountant, the Argentine Republic had ever seen.

Mr. Cook replied in a few words, and General Manager Henderson was then loudly called for but was not to be found, although a determined attempt was made to hunt him up. Mr. Henderson had put in an appearance twice during the evening, and each time after a short stay had disappeared just at the wrong time — for us. As the General Manager was nowhere to be found, Mr. Brodie Henderson, C. E., of the well-known London engineering firm of Livesey Son & Henderson, and a brother of the General Manager, was called for and — he had also disappeared, although he belonged to our train. This coincidence gave rise to rumors of a conspiracy on the part of the Messrs. Henderson, which, however, after careful investigation were unanimously declared to be without foundation.

The hour of 11 p.m. now having arrived, the President's train continued on the return journey to Bahia Blanca, and at about 11.30 p.m. we too again started for that point. At dinner we had been informed that it had been definitely decided that the morrow would be spent in visiting the new military port and batteries under construction at Punta Alta and along the coast for some miles to the east, which information gave great satisfaction to all, as there had been a universally expressed desire to see the new works. It was midnight when we retired, after having had a jolly evening that will long be remembered by all who were present, and having partaken of the most remarkable scratch or impromptu dinner ever served.

Friday morning found us at El Puerto shortly after coffee and roll time, and here our three heavy trains were broken up and all the dining-coaches placed together with a day-coach and the store vans in one train, the sleeping coaches being left behind to receive a fresh supply of water, gas, etc., during our visit to the military port. A special train had been made up immediately on the arrival of train N° 1 and before we arrived had started for Buenos Ayres with President Roca, the Hon. W. A. C. Barrington, Mr. William White, C. E., and a few others who were very anxious to get back because of the press of affairs demanding their attention.

It was not far from 10.30 a.m. when we made a start for Punta Alta, running out on the Tandil line as far as Grünbein, and from there proceeding via the new line to the military port. Our journey was through a most uninteresting country, and shortly before noon we found ourselves at the south-easterly end of the limits of the new port works, having run along at the back of the rolling ground that lies along the coast. Here we turned sharply to the right, and almost due west, and ran out to the water-front. Again turning to the right and heading to the north we ran along the water-front close to the water. On our left, built out into the sea, were the long lines of piling and frame work which are to filled in with stone to form the break-waters; to our right, on the slopes of the low hills, and on the tops of some of them were many buildings, temporary and permanent, machine shops, engine and boiler houses, quarters for the men employed at the port, nice dwellings for the staff and a most comfortable house occupied by Engineer Luiggi. After running some hundreds of yards through the works, we came to a stop and all were invited by Mr. Luiggi to inspect a section of

one of the underground passages where potable water is collected, and on descending a spiral staircase we found ourselves in a long narrow passage that gave us just elbow-room and head-room enough to get through. The darkness was relieved by lanterns placed a few yards apart, and under the planks that we walked on were some 18 inches of clear water. After going some 50 yards we ascended by another staircase to the surface and returned to the train, where breakfast was served.

As soon as all were on board we started again and continued along the water-front for some two miles within the bounds of the military port reservation. and again turning to the right soon found ourselves back on the main line of the military railway headed towards Punta Sin Nombre, having made a complete loop round the reservation. Steaming slowly along the coast in a south-easterly direction, we soon came to the Arroyo Pareja, where we caught sight of the steam launches from the squadron, which now came into view in the offing, coming into the Arroyo, each with two or three large pulling boats in tow. We stopped a moment at the end of the bridge while the Minister of Marine left orders for the officer in command to proceed to the wharf at the Military port and there await further orders. Shortly after crossing the Arroyo we gradually swung around more to the left, and from that point until we reached the N° 3 battery at Punta Sin Nombre, about seven miles away, our general direction was almost due East. Steaming through the sand hills along the coast there was little to be seen, and we devoted most of our time to the breakfast of which we were partaking, excepting when we passed the back of one of the new batteries, of which we saw four before reaching Punta Sin Nombre.

Just as we were finishing our coffee, battery N° 3 came into sight, and we drew up at the station at the back of it. Here all but a dozen or so got down and made their way to the battery, the guns of which were fully manned, while the band was drawn up on the parade. Hardly had the Ministers and those who were in front nearest them arrived within the battery when, with a crash and roar, one after the other, the four great 9.2 in. Krupp rifles, which had been loaded with a full charge of powder, hurled a projectile weighing over 300 pounds out over the water. The battery was then inspected and everyone evidenced great interest in everything connected with it. From the top of the parapet an extensive

view across the waters of the entrance channel could be obtained, and the sand-banks and islands on the other side were to be seen.

After spending about fifteen minutes in viewing the battery the Ministers returned to the parade and the band struck up the National Hymn and all uncovered, excepting the Minister of Marine, Commodore Rivadavia, who was in uniform, and the battery officers and some Naval officers, all of whom stood at attention with their right hands at the visor of the cap, like so many statues, until the air came to an end. Then a salute was fired from the great guns and many of us returned to the parapet to watch this operation, standing within a few feet of the guns as they were fired. The firing over, we returned to the train and started back for Punta Alta, stopping at each of the new batteries under construction and examining the work being done on them, which, by the way, was all of the very highest class. At battery Nº 7 a stop of sufficient duration to admit of the laying of the front stone with the Argentine arms was made. Minister Rivadavia first placed some cement under the stone, and then many of the other Government officials followed suit. Champagne was drunk, Engineer Luiggi proposing the prosperity of the Republic. Many photographs were taken here both by the professionals with the party and by amateurs.

On the way back to Punta Alta Engineer Luiggi invited the Ministers and several other gentlemen to visit his house and make an inspection of the work being done on the dock, etc., so, when we had arrived at the station behind the military reservation just before 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the specially invited guests entered the carriages in waiting and drove at a full gallop across the low land and up the hill to the Luiggi mansion. Mrs Luiggi, an Englishwoman, by the way, received the party in a most cordial and graceful manner; champagne and biscuits were served, and after a few minutes spent in conversation a start was made to go round the works under Engineer Luiggi's guidance. We in the train, who were in blissful ignorance of what was going on, began to wonder if we were to spend the balance of the day there, and General Manager Henderson, and the other railway officials who were equally ignorant of the plans of the party, ordered the locomotive whistles to be blown, and the three locomotives at the station soon ntered into a contest, apparently to see which could make the most

noise. While all this disturbance was being kicked up at the station, Engineer Luiggi was engaged in showing his guests the great centrifugal pumps at work at the dock, and explaining the great difficulty experienced because of the great rise and fall of the tide, some 12 ft. At the head of the wharf, Commodore Rivadavia ordered the boats of the squadron to return to the ships, and after visiting the telegraph station the carriages were again taken and a start made for the train. It was with a feeling of relief that we saw the carriages coming down the hill and over the low lands, the horses on the gallop, and just before 5 o'clock we again started for El Puerto, which station was reached shortly before six.

There was much to be done before we could get away, as it was necessary to charge the gas tanks under the dining-coaches and supply them with water, also the three trains had to be made up, and all this took time. It was eight o'clock when N.° 1 got away and about a quarter to ten when we drew out of the station, while still seated at the dinner-table, that meal having been served later than usual because of the existing conditions.

A heavy North wind was blowing when we left El Puerto and everything seemed to indicate a coming storm. At Bahia Blanca the Bahia-Blanca and North-western officials left us and a few other gentlemen as well, some of whom remained at Bahia Blanca for a day or two, while others including Dr. Alston, returned to Buenos Aires via the North-western and Western railways, having been invited to do so by the officers of those lines.

For some reason or other, there was considerable story-telling during the evening, and one well-known Argentine told the following story illustrating how European civilization found its way into Tucuman, and we will here say that he vouched for the truth of the story, which is as follows: — Many years ago a French barber arrived in that then far-off region. Until the arrival of the Frenchman, the barber's shop had consisted of a small mud shanty, a stool, a small table partly imbedded in the wall, on which lay the razors, a semi-mate cup for the soap, and a nut-shell perforated so as to admit the introduction of a man's finger. Everything was most picturesque, to say nothing of the barber, dressed in «chiripa» with a red shirt and with a handkerchief round his neck. The high-life Tucumanos used to walk in and sit for half-an-hour on the stool, the soap was applied by the barber with his hand, he digging his fingers into his customer's ears, eyes, nostrils and mouth with

lightning rapidity, then sticking the nut-shell on the first finger of his left hand, he laid hold of the razor which had been previously stropped on the tableboard and his leg. The client was requested to open his mouth and in went the barber's finger with the nut-shell to swell the cheek. After one cheek had been shaved the nose was squeezed and pulled all round the face as if endeavouring to salute the ears while the upper lip was shaved, these in their turn were drawn back as if to meet behind the head. In fact, the barber of Seville was nothing but a shadow alongside his Tucuman brother. At first, when the Frenchman opened his neat shop, with powder, puffs, scents, etc., the Tucumanos did not know what to make of it, but, mustering up courage, a then well known social man of the city entered the shop of the new barber and was shaved, after which he spent the day in relating to his gentlemen friends the story of his wonderful experience while in the hands of the dexterous Gaul. Immediately the upper-ten of Tucuman made a descent on the shop; hardly any one asked for change during the first few days, and when each night came and the worthy Frenchman with aching arms and tired hands, counted out his money, he thought he had arrived at Paradise. His success was assured, and after a time he started a bakery and introduced French bread into that far distant province; later, he went into the sugar business, and when he died he left an estate valued at nearly three millions.

Saturday morning we awoke to find the weather duller than ever, and our heavy train moving slowly against a terrific wind, which struck it slantingly on the left side, and greatly retarded our progress. As has already been mentioned, it was blowing heavily when we left Bahia Blanca and the wind had increased during the night. After early breakfast the morning was spent in conversing, reading and whist-playing until Azul was reached, when we left the dining-coach that the tables might be set for breakfast. We left Azul at about 11.45 a.m. and reached Las Flores about 2.35 p.m. Here one of the new four-coupled compounds was again attached to the train, which, having been lightened by dropping off four of the heavy sleeping-coaches, pulled so much easier that our average time from that station to Buenos Aires was 50 kilometres an hour, including stops, although it began to rain heavily soon after leaving there, and the wind, which had died down somewhat during the middle of the day, again increas

ed in force, and many a kilometre was run at a speed of 70 kilometres an hour.

Mr. H. C. Allen in his second address at Fortin Uno, spoke with pardonable pride of the perfection of the organization of the Great Southern Railway, which he said, had been exemplified by the way in which the « somewhat complicated » — we should have dropped the word « somewhat » — transport arrangements of the excursion had been carried out. This was certainly a prominent feature of the excursion, if we may be allowed the expression, which spoke louder than any mere words could have done, of the soundness of every link in the great chain that may be said to start from General Manager Henderson's office. It was evident, long before we returned to Buenos Ayres, that not only had every officer of the operating departments done his part well in preparing for the excursion, but that they had been ably seconded by their staff. The morning that we left Buenos Ayres, the local trains were not interfered with, and arrived and left practically on time, every one of them. And from start to finish not a single accident, or mishap of a disturbing nature occurred, with the exception of the flood which prevented the carrying out of the original programme, and the officers of the railway were hardly accountable for that. Our train N.° 2, was in the immediate charge of traffic Inspectors (Division Traffic Superintendents) Coleman and South, while N.° 1 was in Charge of the Superintendent of Traffic, Mr. Gregory, and Inspector Bertorini, while Inspectors Philp and Hopson had charge of N.° 3. On the locomotives beside the regular drivers, as we passed over different sections of the line, were Mr. Gould's Locomotive Inspectors, Messrs Bannatyne, (Chief), Bridge, McGaw Orman and Purvis. The Traffic Inspectors we were brought in contact with, and all realised that they were looking after the trains; the Locomotive men, few of the party outside of the railway men knew anything about, and neither did they know that at Plaza Constitucion in the movement office, at all times were either Mr. Quade the Chief, or Messrs. Gough, Thiem, Orzali or Vilas directing the movement of our trains by telegraph.

The very satisfactory restaurant service was in charge of Mr. Eppenstein, the manager of the railway's restaurant department, he being in the immediate charge of the gastronomic department of train N.° 1, while Mr. Gagneux, Inspector of restaurants, was with N.° 2 and the leading « Chef » looked after N.°3.

In describing the make up of train N° 2 we spoke of a luggage-van piled high with edibles, and as it may be of interest to know what was provided for the occupants of the trains we will give a list of some of the principal articles, leaving out the delicacies. There were 150 «lomos», 96 legs of mutton, 18 wethers, 48 sides of beef, 80 doz. kidneys, 250 chickens, 48 pair fowls, 48 young turkeys, 450 doz. fresh eggs, 36 baskets grapes, 36 bunches bananas, 1800 apples, 1800 oranges, 700 pears, 1800 large loaves of bread, 450 litres milk, 1200 cauliflowers and other vegetables, greens, etc., ad. lib., 120 dozen large pejerey and 108 doz. corbina and plenty of ice. The dozens of less important articles of diet we have no space to mention. None of these things were intended for the banquet, other supplies had been sent to Roca for that.

The operating departments of the railway are not the only ones that were concerned with the excursion. The Local Committee Messrs William White, C. H. Krabbé and G. T. Crane, were busily engaged with the invitations for some time previous to our departure for the South and the general plan for the inauguration trip emanated, we believe, from their office, but we have Mr. Allen's assurance that there was not a detail of the whole sumptuous affair that had not been passed on by General Manager Henderson. Much of the work of apportioning the gentlemen invited to the different trains, as well as other important work in connection with the invitations, fell on the shoulders of Mr. Hickey, the Secretary of the Local Committee, and he and his staff must have had a busy time of it for many a day previous to our departure.

As we approached Buenos Ayres the time was occupied in bidding good-bye to our fellow travellers, and as we rolled into the Station at 6.15 p. m. there was not a man on train N° 2 but felt that he had taken part in the best arranged and most successful long distance railway-excursion ever carried out in South America.

OBSEQUIO

DEL

DIRECTORIO del FERROCARRIL del SUD

AL SEÑOR PRESIDENTE

DE LA

REPUBLICA ARGENTINA

TENIENTE GENERAL

JULIO A. ROCA

Junio 14 de 1899.

AL EXCMO. SEÑOR PRESIDENTE DE LA REPÚBLICA,

TENIENTE GENERAL DON JULIO A. ROCA.

La Empresa ha solemnizado un acontecimiento de trascendencia Nacional en la inauguración de su línea al Neuquen, destinada, sin duda, á vigorizar con una verdadera supresión de distancias el desenvolvimiento económico, al par que la unidad política de una estensa zona de territorio.

Así, por tal circunstancia, como porque V. E. ha prestado patriótico concurso á esa hermosa fiesta de nuestra civilización, de nuestra cultura y de nuestro progreso, el Directorio del Ferrocarril del Sud me ha encargado que, como recuerdo conmemorativo de ella, presente á V. E. con sus respetuosos cumplimientos, el modesto objeto de arte que tengo el honor de enviar à V. E.

Aprovecho la oportunidad para saludar á V. E. con mi más distinguida consideración personal

GUILLERMO WHITE.


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